Encounter

Edited by STEPHEN SPENDER & MELVIN J. LASKY

WHAT FUTURE FOR AFRICA ?

THOMAS HODGKIN · ELSPETH HUXLEY
TWO VIEWS

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What Future for Africa?

I — *Thomas Hodgkin*

And the composer of the verses asks a curtain
Of beautiful vestments to cover him from error.
A poor slave, ignorant, drowning in a sea of sin,
Confused in a sea of fantasy,
Humble, speaking Arabic incorrectly, non-Arab in tribe,
His mother and father are from the family of 'Al....

THIS IS AN EXTRACT from a work by an African poet, Abdullahi dan Fodio, the Fulani scholar and politician, younger brother of Usuman dan Fodio, leader of the Fulani *jihād*, in what is now the Northern Region of Nigeria, at the beginning of the 19th century. We could usefully imitate his modesty—even if it sounds a little artificial. I am becoming disturbed by the proliferation of immodest opinions, expressed by Western Europeans and North Americans in particular, about Africa and Africans. It might be a good thing if we gave up trying to say or write anything for the next few years, and concentrated instead upon observing, learning, thinking, understanding within the limits of our capacities. Then we might begin to get somewhere. I would myself willingly take part in such a moratorium if others—those especially who appear to me to be drowning deeper in a sea of sin, to be even more confused in a sea of fantasy, than myself—would agree to do likewise. In the hope that suitable arrangements can be made, I offer these final remarks.

THERE ARE several reasons why at the present time we tend to write so much nonsense, or half-sense, about the contemporary African situation, and the possibilities of the African future. One is that the present and the future bear an evident relationship to the past. And we are deplorably ignorant about the past of the various African peoples and states. Moreover, what we think we know is largely wrong. Admirable efforts are being made—by the London School of Oriental and African Studies, for example, by the new *Journal of African History*, and by African Universities—to remedy these vast deficiencies, to correct these grotesque distortions, in what has hitherto been presented as "African History." But it is clear that the study of African history is only now beginning to develop its proper methods of enquiry, its critical standards, and the authority that is the consequence of these. Even the most interesting of its findings have scarcely begun to penetrate the minds of the Western intelligentsia. We are still to a large extent nourished by the myths of our childhood and schooldays, in a way that does not occur in the case of European, or even, I think, Asian history. Members of our educated classes no longer

THOMAS HODGKIN *is one of the best-known British scholars in the field of African studies. Among his books are* NATIONALISM IN COLONIAL AFRICA *and an historical anthology entitled* NIGERIAN PERSPECTIVES.

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dare to refer to John of England or Ivan the Terrible as a "bad king," or to Muhammad as a "misguided fanatic," not because they are themselves familiar with recent work regarding John, Ivan, or the Prophet, but because they realise they would make themselves ridiculous if they applied *1066 and All That* categories of explanation to persons in European and—though this is less certain—Asian history. But the truth that these categories are no more valid when applied to African history has not yet been generally accepted.

There are two obvious difficulties in the way of developing a more intelligent attitude to African history among Western intellectuals. One is the lack of readable material. I do not mean, in this context, the lack of source material. It would not be difficult to draw up a list of a hundred major African actors in the 19th-century history of Saharan and sub-Saharan Africa in regard to whom it would be entirely practicable, as well as desirable, to undertake full-length, critical biographical studies. Until such studies, and similar studies relating to earlier periods, have been carried out it is no wonder that we flounder in a sea of fantasy. But, even in cases in which a more careful, more perceptive, and essentially truer, assessment of the historical role of a given African leader is now available, our residual colonial contempt for non-Western peoples in general and for Africans in particular makes us hesitant to accept it. Take the case of Muhammad Ahmad ibn 'Abdallah, the Sudanese Mahdi. R. M. Holt, in his excellent book on the *Mahdiyya*, quotes this translated extract from the Mahdi's reply to Gordon's letter offering him the sultanate of Kordofan (and enclosing a red robe of honour and a tarbush):

> Know that I am the Expected Mahdi, the Successor of the Apostle of God. Thus I have no need of the sultanate, nor of the kingdom of Kordofan or elsewhere, nor of the wealth of this world and its vanity. I am but the slave of God, guiding unto God and to what is with Him . . . and God has succoured me with the prophets and the apostles and the cherubim and all the saints and pious men to revive His Faith. . . . As for the gift which you have sent Us, may God reward you well for your good-will and guide you to the right. . . . It is returned to you herewith with the clothing We wish for Ourself and Our Companions who desire the world to come.

(The clothing referred to by the Mahdi was a *jubba*, the patched garment which served as the uniform of the *Anṣār*, the Helpers of the Mahdi.) The Mahdi, as Dr. Holt's account makes clear, was a man of deep religious and political convictions; no less so, certainly, than Mr. Gladstone, and no less interesting an historical figure. In attempting to establish the Kingdom of God on earth, beginning with the Sudan, he was no doubt over-optimistic, but so, in their different way, were British 19th-century Liberals. To substitute this more adequate account of his life, achievements, policies, ideas, and of the historical situation within which he had to operate, for the myths of our childhood, is not a form of nationalist romanticism. It is simply to move from a more naïve to a more mature level of historical thinking.

HOWEVER, EVEN IF the most ambitious programme of studies of the lives and contributions of individual African rulers, statesmen, religious leaders, scholars, could be carried out, we should still be a long way from achieving a reasonable understanding of African history. The principle that the history of a people cannot be adequately understood as the history of its dynasties, kings, paramount chiefs, nobility, *'ulamā,'* and top people generally, is as valid for Africa as it is for Europe. Until we know a great deal more about the conditions of the people —vassal tribes, slaves, with their differing degrees of servitude, free commoners, the rank-and-file of the army—in the various African states at successive periods, we shall remain very much in the dark about the real character of these systems and of the causes of the changes which they have undergone. But until very recently such questions have scarcely been raised—let alone answered. Hence *belle-lettrist* generalisations about "the African past," and speculations about "the African future" derived from them, are likely in present circumstances to be valueless.

A further reason for our incompetence is that we do not, for the most part, see the

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contemporary African situation from at all the same standpoint as the majority of African intellectuals. We have come to make use of the term "decolonisation;" to take for granted that Western European colonial power is being withdrawn, more or less rapidly, from the African continent; and to be worried only about the possible consequences of this withdrawal. Few Africans, even those whose political thinking approximates most closely to that of Westerners, regard the phase of history through which we are now passing in this kind of way. They are far more conscious of the survival of unlimited, naked colonial power in a number of states—Algeria, the Union of South Africa, Southern Rhodesia, the Portuguese territories; and the emergence of "neo-colonialism" (meaning the granting of formal independence, combined with the continuing effective *présence* of the metropolitan power) in others—the states of the French Community, or, under very different conditions, the Congo. For Africans who think continentally, or globally—and there are many of these—"colonialism" remains a dominant aspect of the contemporary situation. Indeed, they think with much greater subtlety than we about such matters, and are skilled in distinguishing the varying degrees of intensity with which *"le poids du colonialisme"* presses upon the peoples of the various African states. And "colonialism," in almost every context, means Western colonialism: naturally, since Africans do not feel themselves confronted with the fact, or likelihood, of domination from any other quarter. They are not at all impressed by the thesis, favoured by American publicists—"European colonial systems are now virtually liquidated: therefore let us, the Free World, protect you against the dangers of Soviet or Chinese colonialism."

THERE IS A DEEPER sense in which we are ill-equipped to understand the processes of political and social change taking place in modern Africa.

We are too remote, historically, from our own revolutions—three centuries away in the British, almost two centuries in the American, case. And when African intellectuals, interested in our own histories as well as theirs, draw attention to resemblances between their political theories and those of the English Levellers, or Thomas Jefferson, or Robespierre, we seldom see the point. Americans, in particular, are inclined to argue that Africans must either be democrats in their sense of the term—meaning "Western values," anti-Communism, two-party systems, free enterprise, church-on-Sundays, glossy magazines, etcetera—or, if they claim to be democrats in some other sense, they must be crypto-Communists. But, I have argued elsewhere, there is a strong vein of Rousseauian revolutionary democracy running through the ideologies of most African radical nationalist parties and popular organisations.

There are, I think, five respects in which these similarities are most marked. There is, first, the tendency to take certain ethical presuppositions as the point of departure: the purpose of liberation is to recover the dignity, or assert the moral worth, of African man. Second, there is the classic conception of "democracy," as involving, primarily, the transfer of political power from a European dominant minority—an oligarchy of colonial officials, or settlers, or some combination of the two—to an undifferentiated African *demos*. Third, there is the idea of the radical mass party, and its associated organisations, as expressing—as adequately as it can be expressed—the desires and aspirations of the *demos*, the common people; and as having therefore the right, once independence is achieved, to take control of the state, and reconstruct it in the party's own image and in relation to its own objectives. There is also the constant insistence upon human equality: *"il n'y a pas de surhommes"*—as Sekou Touré once put it. Hence it is not only the privileged status of the European minority that is attacked, but also the special privileges and claims to authority—deriving from the pre-colonial or the colonial period—of groups within contemporary African society, chiefs, *marabouts*, "bourgeois intellectuals."

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They can play a part within the new system only to the extent that they accept its egalitarian assumptions. Finally, there is the idea of the artificiality, undesirability, and impermanence of barriers—ethnic, linguistic, territorial, cultural, "racial," religious—within humanity, "Pan-Africanism," in one of its aspects, being an attempt to apply this idea in the modern African context.

THE SITUATION is, of course, a great deal more complex than this analogy might seem to imply. No radical nationalist party has an ideology which conforms at all exactly to this model—and there are many trends of thought within contemporary African nationalism which are not radical. The way in which a given radical party or movement—FLN in Algeria, PDG in Guinea, CPP in Ghana—looks at the world naturally reflects the culture and history of the society within which it has developed. Even in so far as concepts of a broadly Rousseauian type are made use of, they are not necessarily derived from Rousseau. They have been modified in the light of methods of historical explanation drawn from Marx, ideas about party organisation taken over from Lenin. And they have been adapted to fit specifically African situations and problems. None the less, I think it is the tendency of Western intellectuals to turn their backs upon their own revolutionary democratic tradition—to regard the common stock of late-18th/early-19th-century radical ideas as foolish, old-fashioned, utopian stuff in which it is easy to pick logical holes—that especially disqualifies us from understanding, or regarding sympathetically, the African revolution. Now that Cole and Laski are dead there are, perhaps, very few who consciously relate themselves to this tradition. This is one of the advantages of the Russians, and increasingly of the Chinese also, in their relations with African nationalists. They may regard the latter as petty-bourgeois, a kind of African *narodniki*, and the national revolution as merely one stage in the inevitable march towards Socialism. But they, unlike us, have an idea what it is all about.

OF ALL THE OBSTACLES in the way of understanding the African situation the most serious is this curious collection of intellectual junk with which we are still burdened—the colonial stereotypes which, in varying degrees, trouble the minds of all of us.

"Africans never invented the wheel.... Their thinking is pre-logical—intuitive, not conceptual.... They were living in the Stone Age till we came and shook them out of it. ... Pre-colonial African societies were static, immobile, unaffected by the course of external history.... In their Middle Ages they built no cathedrals; they produced no Dante or Thomas Aquinas.... They are naturally lazy, sitting under banana trees, waiting for the bananas to drop into their mouths.... *Il leur manque une conscience professionnelle*.... Whatever Africans appear to have achieved in the way of civilised societies was due to 'Hamites', to Arabs and Berbers, to the Portuguese, to anyone but themselves.... They are essentially children.... They are primitive.... They are decadent.... Altogether they are no good."

For quite a long time I used to imagine that those who asserted such propositions took them seriously, and would attempt to discuss them carefully, one by one—the diffusion in Africa of the working and use of iron; the reasons why Africans had turned their creative powers to activities other than the construction of cathedrals; the actual achievements of Africans in the fields of philosophical and scientific thinking. Gradually, however, it became clear that such propositions could only be propounded, and re-stated with appropriate variations, not discussed. Although in many cases they appeared to have an historical reference, those who asserted them were not really interested in historical facts. Essentially the same kinds of generalisation were constantly being trotted out by the French *colons* in North Africa in relation to the Arab-Berbers as were reproduced, in a totally different historical and social context, by British settlers in Kenya in relation to the Kikuyu and the Masai. The fact that the ancestors of the Berbers were arguing about the doc-

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trine of the Trinity at a time when the ancestors of the French were running about in skins made virtually no difference to *colon* attitudes.

IN FACT, THE CONFUSED assortment of myths which becomes part of the *colon*'s intellectual equipment has to be understood as referring to the *colon*'s own situation, not to the colonised people at all. When *colon* A says of colonised people B that they are "like children," or "pre-logical," or that they "have only recently emerged from the Stone Age," and all the rest of it, what he really means is that he would like to preserve the colonial situation, in which a dominant European minority exercises power over a subject African mass. He would like Africans to behave as much like Red Indians as possible—living quietly in their reserves, and occasionally holding decorous jamborees, at which they dance suitably modified tribal dances, pass a vote of thanks to their White masters, present them with a couple of blankets each, and initiate them as honorary members of the tribe. Once one grasps that these myths have to be understood in this functional way, as mechanisms designed to maintain and justify the colonial relationship, they become entirely intelligible. Nor, of course, are they simply *colons'* myths. The *colons*, living on the frontiers of Empire, self-appointed wardens of the marches, are naturally particularly rigorous and uncompromising in their attempt to preserve the entire structure of beliefs. But we, members of the colonial nations, have all been exposed to and influenced by them, more or less. We have all had a tendency to conceive our relationships with Africans in these Prospero-Caliban terms. Now, however, Africans in territory after territory have made it clear that they are unwilling to accept the role of Red Indians. Indeed, they have gone a considerable way towards blowing up the whole system of colonial mythology—but not the whole way. The intellectual liberation of Europeans has lagged some distance behind the political liberation of Africans. If we can no longer be rulers, we would like at least to be accepted as tutors—writing letters to *The Times*, sitting on committees, influencing "moderate" leaders.

Our profound ignorance of African history, our lack of comprehension of African attitudes to the contemporary situation, our remoteness from the ideals of revolutionary democracy, the distortions in thinking produced by our colonial mythology—these, I would suggest, are good reasons for doubting whether we are likely to have any sensible contributions to make to a discussion of the direction of social and political change in post-colonial Africa. Such questions are better left to Africans. As regards the study of the African past, however, particularly while there is the present acute shortage of African historians, we can probably make some modest contribution—though here too we have to be able to criticise our presuppositions.

IT IS EASIER, as others have found, to demonstrate the logical reasons for silence than to remain silent. So I will end with what is simply a personal impression.

I do not believe that Africans in post-colonial Africa are confronted with a choice between what are sometimes called "Western values" and "African values," or that the actual choices which they have, and will have, to make can be described in such terms. The term "Western values" has no definable meaning for Africans—or rather it includes too many conflicting meanings. "Western values," in the form in which most Africans have experienced them, mean primarily "colonial values"—ranging from the values expressed in the moderately well-intentioned paternalism of the former Gold Coast and Nigeria, through the values implied in racial discrimination in the settler territories, to the values associated with torture and concentration camps in modern Algeria or *apartheid* in the Union of South Africa. Or the term can mean "liberal values," as presented, say, in John Stuart Mill's *Essay on Liberty*, in which Africans

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are very much interested—though recognising the limitations on the extent to which these values ever have been applied, or can immediately be applied, in any actual human society. "Thomist values," "Protestant values," "Marxist values" are also all, in some sense, part of the "Western" tradition.

The idea of "African values" is equally imprecise. Even granted that certain common values can be found expressed in many types of pre-colonial African system—the idea of the responsibility of the community towards all its members, of the collective ownership of land and organisation of work, of the limitation of authority and government by discussion, of the enjoyment of living as an end in itself—the problem of their interpretation and application in the contemporary, post-colonial, situation remains. "African values" can be used to justify traditionalist or tribalist systems, "bourgeois-nationalist" systems, or multinational socialist systems.

No. What is hopeful about the national movements that have emerged in modern Africa is their unembarrassed eclecticism—their readiness to draw intelligently at the same time on the Western democratic (including within this the Marxist) tradition and on their own indigenous resources: their efforts to assert the moral worth and dignity of individuals against the racialists; to push forward the frontiers of liberty against the representatives of authority and legitimacy; to develop the idea of common African needs and interests against the particularists; to insist on peaceful coexistence against the advocates of power blocs and nuclear deterrents; to remind the world of the possibilities of human happiness in the face of the prophets of doom. In doing this they have followed in the tracks of earlier revolutionary movements, no doubt; but they have given old principles a new application and meaning. And in saying this I confess myself an unrepentant Jacobin—

A steady patriot of the world alone,
A friend of every country but his own....

II — *Elspeth Huxley*

"THIS HAS BEEN a day of consolation," Wilfrid Scawen Blunt wrote in his diary on the fall of Khartoum, "and I could not help singing all the way down in the train." (He was going to his place in Sussex to hunt, and next day "had a capital run of six miles quite straight over the Downs.") For Gordon, and for the many thousands massacred, raped, tortured, and enslaved on that November day on the Nile, consolation must have been more elusive.

Blunt was the archetype of the English liberal prepared to go to any lengths in sacrificing himself and others—he was imprisoned in Ireland—to right wrongs. He was fortunate enough to have no doubts as to which side was in the right and which in the wrong. Those in the right, who were never English, were endowed with every virtue. Egyptians were sublime, the Mahdi, in fact a voluptuous fanatic as cruel as Tamurlaine, a wise and noble gentleman anxious for peace and certain to make it if only a debased British government would send out Blunt himself as envoy.

The Mahdi's ferocious followers, who enslaved such prisoners as they did not disembowel, were "men with the memory of a thousand years of freedom, with chivalry inherited from the Saracens, the noblest of ancestors, with a creed the purest the world

MRS. ELSPETH HUXLEY *is the author of some seventeen books, and most of them (history, travel, novels) are concerned with Africa, where she was brought up and lived a good deal of her life. Among the best known:* RACE & POLITICS IN KENYA *(with Margery Perham),* THE SORCERER'S APPRENTICE, *and* WHITE MAN'S COUNTRY. *The most recent are:* THE FLAME TREES OF THIKA *(memories of an African childhood) and* A NEW EARTH *(on a land-reform experiment). As she writes, "I do not expect others to agree," and we will be publishing African as well as European and American dissents in forthcoming issues.*

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ever knew, worshipping God and serving him in arms like the heroes of the ancient world they are." Against them went "mere murderers," that is the British soldiery, "a mongrel scum of thieves from Whitechapel and Seven Dials."

> I confess I would rather see them all at perdition than that a single Arab more should die [Blunt added]. I desire in my heart to see the Arab Blood avenged and every man of Stewart's butchering host butchered in their turn and sent to hell.[1]

Although such frankness is now out of fashion, Blunt has many spiritual heirs who, in their hearts, would rather see every white man in Africa butchered than that a single African should be denied the vote. To justify colonialism you must believe, if you have the cast of mind that needs a moral basis for action, in your own superior virtues and qualities, and in the general inferiority, even if this should prove only temporary, of the subject peoples. To believe wholeheartedly in anti-colonialism you must reverse this and endow the subject peoples with virtues and qualities superior to your own.

The wickedness that warps humanity in other lands, and especially in your own (you must consider), has passed the darker brethren by; somehow they are purer, simpler, deeper, better than Europeans steeped in mean, self-seeking, self-destructive vices. Somewhere, if no longer in our own behaviour, the golden rule can be realised; somewhere, if never in our own country, the golden age can dawn. Rousseau's fantasies, in short, go marching on. "The world apprehends," suggested Laurens van der Post, "that Africa may hold the secret of its own lost and hidden being."[2]

For Blunt, the Arabs held this secret and the path to virtue lay through Islam: until, when he was nearing sixty, he undertook a pilgrimage to a Senussi monastery in the oasis of Siwah. Here a band of ugly tribesmen set upon him, and nothing saved him but the British nationality he had so often felt to be a badge of shame. "My experience has convinced me that there is *no* hope to be found anywhere in Islam," he concluded. "I had made myself a romance about these reformers but I see that it has no substantial basis."

THERE HAVE BEEN many other days of consolation following retreats from many cities since Khartoum—and no going back thirteen years later. Union Jacks have come down like washing off the line with a storm breaking. The nationalists, like the liberals, have won their battles and except in the Union of South Africa, Mozambique, Angola, and possibly Rhodesia, colonialism has given up. Must there be other sad awakenings at the hands of the Senussi's successors? Or will the price be paid in chaos with a good grace, since after all it is other peoples' lives that will be forfeit, other peoples' ruin? Or will the bill never be presented at all?

That, of course, remains the liberal faith. Colonialism imposes law, order, and a set of Western values on people who never asked for them and in a manner they resent. But out of the decay of strength, liberals believe, shall come forth sweetness: after some enjoyment of these things, wrongly imposed yet in themselves and in the main desirable, those at the receiving end will self-impose them in a sensible manner when the colonialists go.

So steeped is Europe now in crime and folly, even her culture running out into the sands of technology, that it really does not any longer seem possible to build the City of God among its semi-detached council houses and ant-heap spin-dryer flats. Yet there must be *some* good building site, somewhere, waiting for this gleaming city. And where but in Africa, still in the recesses of our minds a strange, mysterious, semi-magical land sheltering fabulous beasts and men with heads underneath their arms? And so, Utopia has been Africanised, like the civil service of Ghana. There it lies, the liberal hope, as surely as for Blunt it beckoned across the Libyan sands until he was foolish enough actually to go there.

Fortunately for modern liberals, it is practically impossible to go to Africa in that sense

[1] *Gordon at Khartoum*. By W. S. BLUNT (1911).
[2] *The Dark Eye in Africa* (1956).

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to-day. Airliners will take you to Accra, Lagos, and Kano, to Salisbury and Lusaka, Dar es Salaam and Nairobi, but these places are no longer African, if they ever have been: they are extensions of Whitehall, Wolverhampton, and Purley, and considerably easier to reach in winter. Beyond them, off the tarmac, Africa is still there, but for liberals it has proved to be a sort of snark, or boojum rather: when they find it, they swiftly and silently vanish away.

IN ALL THIS, no one has consulted Africans. Do they want to be Utopianised? Do they want the New Jerusalem to arise in their tawny and eroded land? Some, evidently, do. Our universities are full of eager students preparing to return with the principles of democracy, trade unions, superannuation, logical positivism and nitrogenous fertilisers packed into their brief-cases and, with any luck, a junior Ministership awaiting them at the other end. They are the agents of the new, the cultural colonialism, which liberals are as anxious to propagate as ever 19th-century Tories were to spread their colonialism of soldiers and profits. ("A despotism tempered with gymkhanas," as Shane Leslie described it.)

Freedom is like Tweedledum and Tweedledee. There is Freedom From and Freedom For. Freedom From has won his victory, except in a few, though formidable, pockets of resistance. But Freedom For—what is he after, what does he intend? When asked, it appears that he wants to liberate a spirit, trapped like Ariel in a tree. This spirit lacks a more precise name than the African personality.

Liberals are of course on the side of liberating spirits, especially one called the African personality. But what if it should turn out to have nasty, spiteful, undemocratic habits? To bite the hand that liberates it? Caliban, not Ariel? One must hope not: and the spirit has still to struggle clear of its imprisoning tree. In the painful effort to break free it is bound to writhe and snarl. Once liberated, it will settle down to a display of tolerance, common sense, energy, and goodwill. To those who have helped it out of the tree it will come to show gratitude.

USERS OF THE TERM African personality—Dr. Nkrumah was the first to make it popular—have never, so far as I know, defined it. A definition is badly needed and only Africans can make one properly. But we are all concerned. In the last four years, over twenty independent, or all-but-independent, African nations have emerged from colonialism, and in 1960 fifteen of them took their seats in the United Nations assembly. Soon that personality will impinge upon us all: so we are bound to grope towards some understanding of it.

The sort of society Africans have actually evolved over the centuries must surely give some pointers to the sort of society they are likely to re-create after colonialism. Of course there will be great differences. Two streams of culture and tradition have joined, two systems of morality and government, two divergent approaches to life. By glancing back towards one of these two sources I shall try to draw some conclusions as to general trends, with the warning that they are personal guesswork. I do not expect others to agree.

ALL RACES and peoples started with tribes of one kind or another and in Africa tribes remain the basic unit of society: close-knit, persistent, exclusive, and all-pervading. The tribe is simply the family writ large, the great umbrella under which everyone shelters. A man is nothing without his tribe. Exile is truly worse than death; for the tribe is a community of the dead and the unborn as well as of the living. Past, present, and to come huddle together under the umbrella. The libation is not an empty gesture, it is an actual sharing of the meal. The dead do not lose their place in the community, they communicate in dreams and often return in other guises to give warnings or advice.

So do more generalised spirits. Readers of Camara Laye's *The Dark Child* will remember the little black snake that came to visit

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his father. "That snake," the father said, "is the guiding spirit of our race. He has always been with us; he has always made himself known to one of us. In our time, it is to me that he has made himself known." He came first in a dream, and gave the precise time and place when he would appear in reality. Then he took to making regular visits. The father would stroke the snake, who quivered in response to his hand.

> You can see for yourself that I am not more gifted than any other man.... Nevertheless, I am better known than other men, and my name is on everyone's tongue, and it is I who have authority over all the blacksmiths of the five cantons. If these things are so, it is by virtue of this snake alone, who is the guiding spirit of our race. It is to this snake that I owe everything, and it is he likewise who gives me warning of all that is to happen. Thus I am never surprised, when I awake, to see this or that person waiting for me outside my workshop; I know already that he or she will be there. No more am I surprised when this or that motor bicycle breaks down, or when an accident happens to a clock; because I had foreknowledge of what was to come to pass. Everything is transmitted to me in the course of the night, together with an account of all the work I shall have to perform, so that from the start, without having to cast about in my mind, I know how to repair whatever is brought to me; and it is these things that have established my renown as a craftsman. But all this—let it never be forgotten—I owe to the snake, I owe to the guiding spirit of our race.

Along certain forest roads in eastern Nigeria you pass many fascinating statues of the departed, some primly seated, hat on lap, in best suits and painted in bright colours. Attached to reed screens behind them are offerings for the spirit who is presumed to visit the shrine. On the other side of the continent, near Lake Victoria, a campaign to register individual titles to small-holdings ran into trouble because many householders had buried their fathers under the floor of the hut. While people might exchange fields, to exchange ancestral bones would be impossible, if only because of spiritual fury. Everything that goes wrong—a leg broken by a falling tree, a sick calf, a miscarriage, an attack of 'flu—can be traced to an offended spirit. In the identification and then appeasement of offended spirits the witch-doctors find their principal employment and their main source of power.

In a small part of Tanganyika there is a belt of vegetation known as the Itigi forest. It is less forest than bush, made up of small mixed trees and creating an effect of suffocating monotony. The top is as level as a mown lawn. A desperate struggle for existence on poor soil with low rainfall has obliterated variety. Merely to survive is enough, and bare survival allows no frills; as in the human world, the individual can excel only where there is privilege. The spreading oak needs space around it, light and air.

This Itigi forest is a sort of ideal egalitarian sylvan state, the climax of vegetable tribalism. While the human tribe, of course, never approaches this degree of monotony, the tendency to inflate, magnify, and glorify the individual rarely operates; society's pressure is exerted to cut down any sport that tries to rise too high above his fellows. (And how ironical that British socialists frown on tribalism, which more nearly than any other human system realises their egalitarian ideal.) The obligation to share our wealth turns each family into a miniature welfare state. No relation, however distant, can be refused hospitality for as long as he pleases, and often his demands are much more exacting: money to help educate his children, a cow towards the bride-price needed on behalf of a son. To contribute is not an act of goodwill, it is an obligation at least as inescapable as ours to pay rates—which, after all, help to educate children who are not even related.

Although in Africa the principle has not been carried so far as in Fiji, where the custom called *kerekere* obliges every man to give any relative anything asked for, great or small, there are very few individuals ready to defy both public opinion and their own morality to the extent of rejecting such claims. So the relatively well-to-do civil servant or teacher pays up, gets into debt, and succumbs to bribes to fill the gap: and the corruption of which the outgoing British so sadly complain deepens and widens.

An interesting speculation for a thesis-writer would be the genetic effect, if any, of

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this Itigi-complex, this continual cutting down to size, over the centuries.

The geniuses, misfits, and innovators of the West, while often reviled, have sometimes been respected and generally allowed to breed. As growing-points in a competitive society they must be valued; a static society must have no growing-points and so in Africa, for century after century, most of them have been stamped out.

The mechanisms for enforcing this conformity relied heavily on jealousy, with its attendant suspicion. Jealousy and suspicion are of course ingredients of the peasant's life all the world over, but the African reliance on magic gave them tremendous scope. Jealousy aroused suspicion, suspicion called in magic, and in no time the man with qualities to lift him out of the rut at best found his cattle poisoned and his granaries burnt, at the worst was himself secretly poisoned or openly executed. A man or woman had only to be accused of sorcery for the whole community to close in like a pack of wild dogs round an antelope.

Witch-doctors, scattered throughout the continent in even more profusion than Buddhist monks in Asia, formed a vast college of cardinals far more obscurantist than the worst the Roman Church ever achieved. On every day of the year, in some bush-enveloped village, some potential Galileo found himself poisoned, burnt, or impaled. And so for centuries Africans have been breeding only from conformers. Perhaps the genes of rebellion and enquiry, if there are such things, still await their chance. But all this persistent suppression of the non-conformer must have had some effect: if not genetic, then social. It created an environment resolutely hostile to innovation.

THE CHIEF was an exception to this rule of conformity. He stood out from the rut: not as an individual, as a link between the spiritual and mundane worlds. Only where things had run to seed was he wantonly despotic; his responsibilities were greater than his rewards and the rules governing his succession, duties, and powers were often rigid and closely defined. Should he exceed the limits of his power, the spirit world, acting as usual through witch-doctors, would intervene to curb or destroy him. (As with the Yoruba where, if a chief went too far, his council might present him with a parrot's egg; he was then obliged to retreat into the bush and commit suicide—the life of the god-descended could not be taken but could be demanded, for rulers must serve the people, not their own ambition.)

Chiefs seldom made important decisions without consulting their people, often through elders qualified to speak for them by age and position as heads of families. Any elder normally could speak his mind openly in council or assembly: once a decision had been announced by the chief it was absolute and all argument ceased.

Two of the principles of government on which democratic nations most rely were not merely alien but repugnant. These were the principles of opposition and of equality of suffrage. To question a decision sealed by the chief's pronouncement would combine the crimes, in Western terms, of sacrilege and contempt of court. And those who spoke for the people did so by reason of their position in a hierarchy stretching from the newly circumcised youth to the revered spirit of the greatest ancestor; for anyone to speak out of his station would be indecorous to the point of blasphemy.

Respect for elders was fundamental: the older you got, the closer to the spirit world. The Western system by which the judgment of an untried youth without responsibility or experience carries equal weight with that of a man bearing family and public cares seems to tribal Africans not merely ridiculous, but a threat to the basis of a society sustained by the observance of degree, priority, and place. The whole of Ulysses' speech in *Troilus and Cressida*—"Take but degree away, untune that string, And, hark, what discord follows!"—might have been spoken by almost any tribal elder confronted for the first time by the Western fetish of one man, one vote.

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THIS TIME-HONOURED RELIANCE on the chief, an image of the dominant father, appears to have embedded in the tribal mind that feeling of dependence on which O. Mannoni lays such stress in his study of colonialist psychology, *Prospero and Caliban*.[3] Mannoni gave a Malagasy some quinine tablets. A few days later the young man asked him for a pair of old tennis shoes, and then for various other gifts which Mannoni perceived him to regard as a right and not as a favour. From this, and from other comparable situations, Mannoni concluded that the original gift of quinine had established between himself and the young man, in the latter's mind, a relationship of protector and protégé which fitted into the pattern of Malagasy life.

Repeated many thousand times all over the continent, this was the colonial situation—the white men had unwittingly stepped into the protector's position. A Congolese says to a doctor: "Your herbs cured me. You are now my white man. Please to give me a knife. I shall always come to beg of you." The Malagasy

> was cured not so much because quinine is an excellent remedy for malaria as because a Malagasy who has a protector he can count on need fear no danger: what means his protector may employ to safeguard him is of little interest.

If the Malagasy and the Congolese needed a protector, so did the European need a protégé. Mannoni goes on to suggest that many Europeans who chose a colonial career did so because of a psychological failure in their own competitive society to complete their adaption to an adult world. They had succumbed to what he calls "the lure of a world without men" because they could not come to terms with men as they are. To compensate for this failure, they felt an urge to dominate easily satisfied among people ready to hitch their need to be dependent to a new star. The two states of mind "nicked."

In *The Dark Eye in Africa* Laurens van der Post remarked upon the "enormous hush" that fell when white men arrived on the scene.

> In the African heart there was a calm and tense air of expectation and growing wonders to come, and as a result there was also the most moving and wonderful readiness of the African to serve, to imitate, and to follow the European, and finally an unqualified preparedness to love and be loved.

THEN TWO CHANGES CAME. Tribal society began to crack; and the white man began to fail in his duty to shelter and protect.

In this he was seldom a free agent: the liberals who had won the day at home controlled his actions. Equating the colonial situation with a feudalism they traditionally abhorred, the liberals set out to humble the white colonial and to teach the tribesman to stand on his own feet.

In so doing they inflicted a profound psychological shock. Once his comforting bonds of dependence were loosened, the tribesman began to feel insecure, and then abandoned. This desperate feeling of abandonment, experienced subconsciously, according to this theory underlies the race hatred now so evident. The cheated tribesman turns in anger on the protector who has failed him. You loved me once, Caliban cries to Prospero:

> *Thou strok'dst me, and mad'st much of me; wouldst give me*
> *Water with berries in't . . .*
> *and then I lov'd thee.*

But now things have changed.

> *. . . you sty me*
> *In this hard rock, while you do keep from me*
> *The rest o' the island.*

Resentment is born and hatred follows.

> *You taught me language: and my profit on't*
> *Is, I know how to curse. The red plague rid you*
> *For learning me your language.*

Here lies the root of nationalist bitterness. It is not that independence was once taken away, but that Europeans are now trying to restore it.

THE STRUCTURE of society and the complexion of the mind: abandoning such aspects of the African personality with

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[3] *Prospero and Caliban: A Study in the Psychology of Colonisation*. By O. MANNONI (1956).

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these few shorthand jottings, we must glance at another facet, that of staying power.

It is hardly necessary to make the point that Africans, even if they retained a need for dependence, were very far from being the children they were often said to be by patronising Europeans. They may even have reached the opposite pole. Far from standing in pristine innocence upon the brink of enlightenment, African society may well be like the soil on which it lives, immeasurably old. Leakey has suggested that our species started on its strange journey in the region of Lake Victoria. Climate and white ants have destroyed most traces of the many cultures that have risen and declined, but archæologists have found enough to demolish the theory that Africans hung back from the march of material progress because they were isolated, jungle-bound, and debilitated by disease. They did not, it now seems, hang back at all; they pioneered.

The great Egyptian monuments have always been there to prove it, and now we can add the achievements of Meroe and Kush, and the Nok cultures of the Niger and Benue valleys dating back beyond 2,000 B.C. Axum flourished before Rome; later, but still in the van, came the empires of Mali, Songhay, and Ghana now giving their names to countries linked to them only by racial pride. Later still arose such kingdoms as Benin and Ife and, in the east, the more legendary Zanj (or Zinj). And there is Zimbabwe, now generally held to be the ruin of a mediæval Bantu palace in the kingdom of Monomotopa, whose people worked in metal and gold.

All these have disappeared, if not without trace at least without much impact. Artistically and materially, African creativeness seems to lie in the past. Even the celebrated bronze workers of Ife and Benin have lost their skill and no one now builds dry-stone walls like Zimbabwe's. Is African culture decadent rather than nascent? At any rate it has proved itself remarkably resistant to alien influences. In the shadow of honey-coloured forts built four hundred years ago by the Portuguese, modern Giriama women come in their neat palm-frond skirts to barter cotton, and return to huts of mud and mangrove pole with three outside stones for a kitchen: to head-borne earthenware water-pots filled at the spring, to plantain-leaf plates and calabash drinking vessels.

Simple, sensible, adapted to the climate: wise Giriama, whom only agents of the export drive would itch to change. Why build thick stone walls to last a thousand years if a cool round hut will answer, and crumble when no longer wanted? Why toil to make glazed pottery when it is just as clean and much less trouble to eat from a leaf? Why spin and weave cotton when palm-frond skirts do just as well? Arabs have been settled on the Azanian coast for over a millennium and the tribes whose land abuts their ancient cities continue in a way of life almost wholly unchanged. They have not even been converted to Islam. They have seen, but have been unimpressed, and continued to prefer their own way of expressing their personality.

HERE WE MAY sum up the suggestions made so far about some aspects of the African personality at this point in time. Rooted in tribe and family, it is inward-looking, defensive, and sustained by intricate patterns of kinship and age-grade stratification which afford protection against a world always hostile and dangerous. "The individual"—Mannoni again—"is held together by his collective shell, his social mask, much more than by his moral skeleton." So he evades the kind of responsibility schoolmasters try to put upon prefects, the army upon officers, industry upon managers: the grappling of loyalties to an institution or an idea. Loyalties belong to people, mainly of one's own flesh and blood.

It is a personality at once sustained and ruled by spirits who practise no *apartheid* between ghosts and men. Causality arises not from logic but from natural mysteries and from human malignancy. People are judged not by their fruits but by their flowers: not by what they do, but by what they are. If accepted, they are to be followed with uncritical devotion; if rejected, they may be

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spurned and tortured with a frank delight in others' pain. Human life counts (and then it counts enormously) only if it enlarges your own family and clan; in itself it has no more value than that of a rat or an elephant. God is aloof, and has never troubled to redeem mankind. So it is sensible to live the moment with enjoyment, song and dance, considering the birds of the air who do not reap nor gather into barns; for time is a servant, not a master; it runs on without divisions, as the years without changes in the length of days.

It is also proud, this personality, and passionate. It has expressed itself in chiefs a-dangle with gold ornaments, attended by courtiers and concubines in profusion and honoured by the sacrifice of a thousand slaves. It likes colour and panache, and a leader who looks and behaves like one. It respects wealth. The ascetic has never appealed. Everyone would admire Solomon, but John the Baptist would seem an idiot. The puritan ideal is not only absent, it is not understood. While moderation may be sensible, self-denial is absurd. The moral code seldom condemns sensuality, greed, lust, cruelty, pride, and slavery; it does condemn disloyalty, inhospitality, bad manners, sorcery, treachery, the disregard of obligations, and indiscipline. It respects old age and children and despises and exploits women, who are everywhere considered inferior to men. It is hierarchical and often merciless, never squeamish, fond of argument and debate.

The African climate is extreme and sharp, and either fine or stormy; it lacks those indeterminate, half-way northern days neither one thing or the other. So in the climate of personality there is little room for compromise and postponement, for everyone giving way a bit, for keeping open minds. Like the weather it swings from one extreme to the other; having for so long created little that is permanent, there now seems nothing that cannot be quickly and easily achieved.

It is a personality that puts manners above principle, family above self, race above humanity. Responsive to nuances of relationship, it is often blind to the consequences of acts. There is at the heart of it a profound cynicism, derived partly from a religion based on fear of the supernatural rather than a trust in the divine, and partly, perhaps, on the multiplicity of termites. The soil of Africa is permeated and seething with white ants which have gnawed to nothing all that man has tried to build. The cloud-capped towers, the gorgeous palaces have been eaten down. So what is the use of trying? Only the powers of magic could defeat them to raise up new towers. Insects have eroded African history and left a sort of white-antism in the soul.

GRADUATES AND "BEEN-TO'S" say that tribalism is as archaic as Morris dancing among factory workers in Coventry. Education, that is, literacy—the greatest revolution since the smelting of iron—is sweeping the tribe into limbo. The African personality is being transformed, even time is out-of-date. In this rocket age it is silly to expect nations to grow from their roots by adding rings like trees: they must be fused in a kind of cyclotron like atoms. And it is happening. To question it is to show that you are so buttoned into a colonial mentality as to be unable to tell the famous wind of change from a gin-and-tonic.

It is happening, but of course different things are happening in different places. In the common rooms of Oxford, Cambridge, and the redbricks, tribalism is an old love turned to hatred; in the Congo it is on the rampage; elsewhere it is putting on the garb of political parties. There is a simple test. Can a man of, say, the Luo readily acquire a plot of land among the Kikuyu, a Gogo among the Chagga, a Yoruba among the Ibo, Tiv among Ibibio, Mashona among Ngoni?—almost any two unrelated tribes would do. If not, then the tribal spirit lives.

In claiming that education kills it, nationalists are on shaky ground. Often it seems to quicken rather than to soften a xenophobic pride in the race or nation that grows out of the tribe. Education has revived the Erse, not buried it. Sinhalese has replaced English in the government and law-courts of Ceylon, and the Tamils have gone to the wall. There are other examples. A chief does not cease to be a chief because he has exchanged ostrich

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plumes for a collar and tie and is called a stooge by some nationalists—by no means all; the Kabaka has become the symbol of Baganda nationalism. It is no more a sign of savagery to boast of Zulu blood, Yoruba tradition, or Ashanti custom than of French culture, Russian achievement, or British nationality.

Pride in her clan and in her Xhosa people, re-discovered after years of Western conditioning, is a theme of Noni Jabavu's *Drawn in Colour*. It was the tribal approach to the death of an only brother, not Western philosophy, that healed the wound. When Xhosa met Baganda at the graduate-to-graduate level tribal differences were what stood out, especially differences in sexual custom. Noni Jabavu's sister had married a Kampala lawyer and the Baganda attitude to women shocked the sophisticated visitor, who arranged meetings to face the difficulties.

> At another of these marriage councils, something else had been raised: about some part of my sister's anatomy. "Not having been pulled," as according to their ideas it should have been. She and I were puzzled. . . .
>
> The family spokesman then painstakingly explained their tradition of concubinage for example. The knowledge seemed terrible to me and my sister. Here a modern man, even if a dignitary of the Church of England and therefore presumably striving after different ideals, often had a "ring wife" along with "other wives" and concubines. He would also have "other ladies" to whom he could, if I may put it scripturally, "go in unto" at any time the mood seized him. And it seemed to us southerners that . . . such moods tended to seize a man at any time. . . .

Later, Noni Jabavu came across an explanation of the custom whose practice by the Baganda had puzzled her.

> I read how at nights the Lovedu women and nubile girls sit in their "special houses" and carry out a tribal custom of pulling one another's clitoris to ensure that it should grow long and hang down, a special attraction to the male partner in sexual intercourse. . . . I saw what a gulf there was between our backgrounds. I thought I saw the root of that feminine distrust, contempt, resentment going hand-in-hand with conditioned acceptance of subjugation. Women humbly sank down and knelt, yet inwardly despised "these men" in the very act of humouring them. The difference I saw was that in the south, even before Western philosophy was introduced, our ethics regarding the personality of the individual were not of this order. . . .

What as a rule kills tribalism is not enlightenment but conquest. Someone gains the upper hand and squashes it. The colonial conquest held it down and now, if tribalism is to go, there will have to be a new internal fusion. Within a year of the British withdrawal from Ghana, Dr. Nkrumah had destroyed the safeguards they had entrenched in the constitution to protect minorities and had cracked down smartly and effectively on the largest of them, the Ashanti. In Africa minorities have to be suppressed, not protected, lest they challenge the central authority and disrupt the state.

THE HABIT of colonialism dies almost as hard as that of tribalism. It is the habit of knowing what is good for others and seeing that they get it. In this, liberals are arch-colonialists and have God on their side. ("If we were not humble enough to see ourselves as instruments of *le bon Dieu*," wrote Colonel David Sterling, founder of the Capricorn Society, "we could not have the arrogance to do what we are trying to do in Africa.")

What is good for others, of course, is what is good for ourselves: freedom, peace, democracy and the rule of law, together with derivatives like free speech and assembly, minority rights, trade unions, pensions, local government, co-operatives, a middle class, children's clinics, women's suffrage, and all the other more creditable aspects of Western life. These are the things that are to replace tribalism and re-mould the African personality into one less like Chaka's or the Mahdi's and more like that of David Livingstone, Mr. Gladstone, or Keir Hardy.

For the last thirty years Britain has employed a hand-picked, high-powered, well-paid force of missionaries in the shape of the colonial civil service to spread in benighted places the doctrine of democracy. This force has put the Christians in the shade. Scarcely a waste of bush or tangle of forest now lacks its council or committee formed to supervise schools, direct community development,

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market eggs, or regulate the grazing of cattle. From this humble level an ambitious man may rise to be a member of parliament or even a £3,000-a-year Minister with house, car, and the command of patronage. The prizes of democracy are almost fabulously rich and available in this world, not the next. The cost seems to be nil. No wonder it has caught on.

TO GET, AS IT WERE, BAPTISED into the faith all you need do is to register for a vote. This vote is first of all a kind of dignity, and then a kind of promise. A promise of more wealth, less interference; more land, fewer taxes; more rights, fewer duties.

In the fly-heavy village among humped cattle and naked children and women trudging off with oil-drums on their backs to draw water and men playing bean-in-the-hole games in the shade, political theories lack urgency; you are more concerned with your father-in-law's demand for another goat or talk of making a new dam. If you vote, you vote for a man. A fellow-tribesman if possible, an orator, and the possessor of a quality hard to define: the winning streak perhaps, the instinct for success, the quality that armies smell out and respond to in commanders and that the Greeks saw as the protection gods afford to certain heroes. It has nothing to do with brains, experience, honesty, reliability, or common sense, although of course its possessor can have any of these qualities, or none: the point is irrelevant.

Political parties are among the European introductions that have caught on, like bicycles, tea, football, money, spectacles, bureaucracy, and inoculations. They offer excitement and drama in lives racked by boredom, especially on Sundays; they are hierarchic, they adopt gay uniforms and bands, they gather funds. Sometimes you must have a party ticket to join a co-operative, and join a co-operative to sell your crops. To keep out is not merely foolish but disloyal: not merely disloyal but dangerous. Houses that go up in flames, crops destroyed, cattle hamstrung, women soaked in petrol and set alight, men strangled and pushed down latrines—it all happens, it is all necessary if parties are to re-unite the people and satisfy the instinct to conform.

And in return for your support the party provides not only interest, drama, and hope but also shelter and security. Its leaders step into the position of protectors from which (if we follow Mannoni) Europeans have abdicated. Regaining the haven of dependence the party member, the common African, no longer feels abandoned. The circle is complete. And so is his loyalty to the party leaders who rescued him. They command his allegiance at a deeper level than that of logic or argument. All this has little to do with politics as Europeans practise them. And it is a waste of time expecting the majority to turn against a party because its leaders may appear to act like dictators or buffoons.

SO PARTIES HAVE CAUGHT ON: but not oppositions. Power is too precious a thing, and too dangerous, to be given up once you have won it. Apart from the fact that to wield power is delightful and to relinquish delight absurd, our in-and-out system would shatter the regained protection and bring about renewed abandonment. Chaos would come again; faction would contend against faction, tribe against tribe, effective action would be white-anted. A small token opposition may be useful as a sop to countries that value such things and have a lot of borrowable money, but if it were ever to become a real threat it would have to be squashed.

The in-and-out system is in fact a luxury possible only in countries where time has kneaded into one the many elements that go to form a nation, and where that nation pursues a vigorous life independent of politics and can put up with a good deal of uncertainty, vacillation, and argument. This is not so in Africa, especially since colonialism has degenerated by disuse the social muscles of discipline, authority, and obedience. Under its shilly-shallying and self-doubting rule youth bullies age, boys despise their fathers,

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even women sometimes dare to lift their voices and the stability of marriage goes. The bitter party warfare and outbursts of violence that accompany the return of African rule are as the flexing of half-atrophied muscles coming back into use.

If it should prove that the freedom of the individual to secure justice without reprisal and to speak his mind without fear rose to its peak under colonialism and sank again once liberty was won, the point would still be that no one asked for this kind of freedom. Europeans conferred it *de haut en bas* as a boon, like vaccination, quinine, and elections. To liberals the freedom of the individual is an absolute good, desirable for all men at all times. They may be right, but in their acts, that is to say in their own social achievements, Africans have never affirmed it. To transplant its cult was still a piece of moral and cultural colonialism. Now that Africans are regaining racial freedom they are free to repudiate individual freedom.

IT IS THE SAME with peace. After two world holocausts, and with a pretty plain idea of what will happen in the third, few of us have even a vestigial belligerence. The traumatic experience of those two wars, and imaginations weaned on science, have missed out Africa, where most people over forty grew up to handle a spear. Old men still show their scars and talk about St. Crispin's days when they repulsed tribal enemies or raided cattle, and at this moment in several parts of Africa, not only in the Congo, men are hunting other men with bows, arrows, and swords.

It is no good expecting young men to repudiate fighting where scientists have not made it into calculated mass-extermination. Of course people can have too much of it, just as there can be too much drink or even sex. Among the decapitated bodies, burnt villages, and homeless children there were doubtless martial hangovers, but they did not prevent another raid at the next moon. Fighting and the expectation of it gave the warriors their status, their sexual pride, their sense of purpose: it is this of which they have been deprived and this deprivation which, mainly at the subconscious level, they hold against colonialism. (And of course they have noticed the hypocrisy of banning other people's spears and cattle raids while letting all hell loose with guns and block-busters twice in thirty years.) Enforced peace has emasculated their pride. A Kikuyu proverb says: "A young man is a piece of God." A red-limbed warrior in plumes and rattles might almost make you think so; a tattered engine-cleaner, even a bespectacled office clerk with his brief-case, could not.

But have we not all had to go through it? Redcoats no longer advance with fife and drum and a skirl of bugles; kilted highlanders have ceased to brandish claymores behind the fiery cross. Transmute and sublimate! Football, athletics, the Olympic Games; climb mountains, out-race sound, join Outward Bound. . . . At the end of the journey we are all embarked upon together beckons the affluent family in its own four-bedroomed house, everything fully automatic: not only with two cars in the garage but with its constant visits to art galleries, its interest in archæology and music, its holidays in Mexico and Greece. We must all stop being primitive and like it, Africans as well as everyone else.

Yes, but . . . Africans are being asked so suddenly, and by someone else. *They* did not invent nuclear fission, even gun-powder; they were perfectly happy with spears. They did not invent aircraft which abolish distance, radio which abolishes privacy, vaccines which abolish the balance of nature, and all the other things that make it impossible for them to go on living as they used to, and necessary to live in a way invented by Europeans. They did not even ask for peace. They may not be more aggressive than others but they are almost certainly more bored, and they have plenty of excuses, some of a nature that have caused wars throughout history, such as the splitting of a single people by artificial boundaries. The end of colonialism is like the end of a frost: it reveals all the burst pipes and leaking valves. This end is

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a beginning of upheaval and realignment of boundaries, alliances, nuclei of power.

The newly independent states are starting to build up armed forces—a natural part of nationhood. One thing, and one thing only, unites them: the resolve to wipe colonialism off the face of Africa. A military alliance of African states to invade the Union, or Mozambique and Angola, would seem inevitable unless these countries burst from within. Are any human ideals ever wholly innocent? In the cloak of pan-African unity Dr. Nkrumah and others wish to spread over the continent breeds the maggot of territorial aggression, just as it has in all such garments woven from the yarn of race.

FREEDOM MUST INCLUDE the freedom to unscramble the map of Africa. What colonialists joined together, nationalists put asunder, or wish to; we can see the process in the Congo, in the central African Federation, in Uganda and elsewhere. Only where the fissiparous tendency has been recognised before independence, as in Nigeria, have things so far run smoothly.

After the splintering comes re-grouping on new lines. This can be done either by conquest or by treaty, and no doubt we shall see both. Conquest depends on the existence of an ambitious, astute, and ruthless leader. Ghana has one; the Congo awaits another to put the pieces together. The departure of the white overlord has left a field wide open to a struggle for personal ascendancy that seems likely to occupy the 'sixties with a pageant of Florentine intrigue. Guelphs and Ghibellines may again be locked in picturesque combat offering a spectacle of plot, counterplot, coup, alliance, and assassination a great deal more entertaining than the Empire Day parades, afforestation drives, and cleaner village competitions that formed the usual diversions of colonialism.

In the east, Julius Nyerere has emerged with a status and popularity almost as great as Nkrumah's in the west but with a gentler nature, less flamboyance, and an apparent preference for negotiation and the soft word. He has made Tanganyika the hope of Africa, and his proposal to federate almost every country from the Sudan to the Limpopo is ironic (federation is probably the most hated word in east and central Africa), imaginative, and brave. If he brings it off, he will be the greatest African since Aggrey—a quiet, self-assured, courteous Roman Catholic with courage and a sense of humour. If he fails it will be because his idea is too big, the time too soon, and his rivals too jealous.

BENEATH the conflict of politics lies a deeper conflict of the mind. Broadly speaking, and over-simplified, it is a question of whether the African personality struggling to emerge is to accept and build upon Western values, or whether—leaving aside Western techniques, which it will certainly borrow—it is to follow a specifically African, and to some extent anti-Western, path of its own. To quote Mannoni once more: "It may be said that they [the Africans] accept everything in detail but refuse our civilisation as a whole." He wrote that in 1948. Is it still true to-day?

In 1947 the Malagasies rebelled, and in Kenya the seeds were sown in secret of the Mau Mau revolt whose essence was as he described—a rejection of Western civilisation. With an almost text-book completeness it illustrated the second of the two faces of nationalism, the backward-turning face gazing with a perverted nostalgia at the vanished simplicities of tribalism. Its nature might have been foreseen by studying a treatise published in 1938 and written by the man afterwards convicted as its leader. As Hitler did in *Mein Kampf*, he gave notice of his intentions. In *Facing Mount Kenya*, Jomo Kenyatta extolled the tribal life in the same sort of terms as those used about our own society by Merrie Englanders. Here was that other, pre-colonial Eden: happy, harmonious, idyllic, and free.

Kenyatta was perfectly honest about such customs as the circumcision of girls which seem barbarous to Europeans. He pointed out that circumcision is perhaps the most important of all tribal rites. Symbolically, it

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expresses the unity of the people; socially, it allows for the education of incoming age-groups into the history and traditions of their society; psychologically, it gives the young status and security within the group. The actual operation of cliterodectomy Kenyatta described as being carried out with the dexterity of a Harley Street surgeon; the whole tenor of his treatise was to defend such customs and attack missionaries for trying to "disintegrate their [Kikuyu] social order and thereby hasten their Europeanisation."

Kenyatta's own position was summed up in the dedication of his book to

> all the dispossessed youth of Africa: for perpetuation of communion with ancestral spirits through the fight for African freedom, and in the firm faith that the dead, the living, and the unborn will unite to re-build the destroyed shrines.

THAT IS IT EXACTLY: "to rebuild the destroyed shrines." Here is the December face of African nationalism, hideously distorted in Mau Mau ritual, but seen more pleasingly in many small ways: a tendency, for instance, after an interlude in trousers, to return to a traditional African dress where this already exists and to invent one, complete with bead caps and fly-whisks, where it does not.

But of course there is also a February face. This you can see especially in the schools, in the expressions of the innumerable, the alarmingly multitudinous, bright-eyed, spell-bound children gazing at blackboards as if at the face of God. And you can see it in many other places: peering through a microscope, masked at the operating table, patiently explaining how to cure tobacco, pluck tea, or stop soil erosion, driving locomotives, giving Holy Communion, doggedly soaking in facts at public libraries. (In Kitwe I saw a young miner reading right through the *Encyclopædia Britannica* from start to finish: he had reached CROCODILE.)

All this is remarkable and moving: here is a people that has seen salvation on the march towards the light. It engenders hope that once the torrent of boys (and fewer girls) has poured from these proliferating schools through the new colleges and training centres and universities, out into the current of African life, the changes that have got to come will come quickly and with far less muddle: that once their destiny is back in their own hands, Africans will gain the confidence to run their countries sensibly without the need to prove their mastery by shouting at everyone else. Here is the positive pull, through literacy and Western values, to carry Africans away from their old shrines and into the main stream, such as it is, of atom-age life.

BOTH PULLS are strong and agonising and the most likely outcome seems to be that neither will achieve total victory. If the African personality does not resume the mask and claws of the leopard-man, neither will it assume the noble mien of the Western liberal. For a time it will very likely continue to look both ways, as others have before. However many rockets hit the moon, their inventors go on touching wood, catching fish, supplicating saints, giving and taking in marriage and loving and hating each other just as if they lived in Chaucer's age.

The revolution that is simultaneously shaking off colonialism and letting in Western values with a rush is not yet spent, but must already meet a counter-revolution: not to re-establish colonialism (this could come only at the hands of Russia or China) but to "refuse our civilisation as a whole" while accepting its technical details. After years of being made to feel inferior, Africans are beginning to think that, after all, they had something of value.

They want to revive it: that is their meaning when they speak of the African personality. Some of them want to escape the suffocating cultural weight of the West, as they have escaped from its political grasp. The hope is that their escape will bring about a new growth of their own culture, a new way of seeing things; the danger, that the revolution, like a flash of lightning, may have split the ageing tree of African life. Withered flowers, however hopefully placed in fresh water and fed with aspirin, do not bloom again.

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V. S. Pritchett

On the Scent

A BIG, OBLONG MAN, Manningtree gets out of bed in the morning briskly, straightens up at once, yawns, blows out his chest, then puts on a violet silk dressing-gown and is about to shout joyfully:

"Wakey, wakey! Rise and Shine! Lash up and . . ."—but no! He looks across to the bed where his gnat of a wife is sleeping under a little fizz of dyed red hair, with her busy mouth wide open, even in sleep, and he stops. Putting on a stealthy look and lifting his knees high he tiptoes out of the room. Manningtree's face is important. It has a quality that can only be called blatantly public, like a statue's; this is his fortune and his calamity. He is tall. He is handsome. At 62, he still has beautifully polished fair hair, a pink, boyish skin, and still blue eyes and, at times, total calm. This is his fortunate side. His stealthy, dramatic look as he tiptoes out of the room is an aspect of the calamitous one; it empties clubs and bars, it empties sofas and corners of rooms at parties, it has emptied messes in two world wars. It is the look of the relentless, booming, whispering story-teller.

Take getting up in the morning.

"I arise," he says—making his blue eyes go very small—"from my humble couch"—pulling down the corners of his mouth to mock pathos—"and poop along"—he is confiding—"to the end of the passage"—he is now secretive—"to get in the milk and the papers." Then he makes a peculiar movement of his lower jaw which shoots out sideways, at the same time almost closing his mouth so that he speaks a little grindingly through his teeth and conveys a lurking, better-not-be-caught-red-handed impression. He continues, in a tone now sordid, "to see what's going on in the world," and, at this, his face becomes handsome, nearly blank—"to see," he says disparagingly, "if there is anything of interest."

He stares at you when he says this for a long time and most people have to lower their eyes as one does after looking at the blind statue of some soldier or politician. And then the conspiring look comes on again, he leans towards you with his jaw shooting sideways, driving you bit by bit into your corner until you want to put up your hands and surrender and he goes very mean and nasty about the mouth. "And pick up the post to see if the Manningtree millions have turned up," he adds.

So he describes the first half-hour of the day. His wife, who does not sleep well in spite of doctors and pills of all kinds, is awake, but keeps her eyes closed because she has seen and heard this performance every morning of her married life—except for the war—but she opens them when he brings in her breakfast, keen and singing.

"No luck, old girl! No Manningtree millions. Boo hoo hoo," he says, collapsing his face.

She could scream.

"Bunny's a fool, an ass, a dolt!" she tells her friends, and all her little bits of jewellery repeat the message in flashes from her neck, her ears, her fingers. "I think I shall go mad. We live in two pokey little rooms. I

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have nothing to put on. He hasn't even got a pension. Go to London! Go to Paris! My dear, we can't afford the bus fare to go to the cinema. That gas fire is the only comfort I've got in life." She lowers her voice to a dirty whisper—"As for you know what—we gave that up two years after we were married."

AND THEN she tells them the story of this disastrous marriage. There she was, a woman with brains, attractive too. Men with brains, she never could resist them. Angus, Charles, Duncan, Max—look what they have done. Angus an admiral, Max Governor of somewhere—but just because she was potty about a shifty and brilliant painter who jilted her for an Irish waitress—she had to go and marry Bunny Manningtree on the rebound. He worked for a travel agency and was hopeless at it.

"Of course," she says, pulling herself together, "he is a Manningtree. Lord Manningtree is his cousin. They are all bankers, shipbuilders, Cabinet Ministers, worth millions.

"I always have a look at the *Times* to see if any of them have died," she says, twisting her little face, for she has caught something of his habits after twenty-five years—"but the fool! He even says he doesn't think he's any relation at all, won't even write a letter, and here we stick in this hole. And I had talent! We scrape, we sit. I stay in bed half the day and he comes in the evening with his library book—and he reads bits out to me. History! Mexico! That's the latest thing. The Aztecs."

She gives a hysterical laugh.

"D'you know—I asked him what he wanted to do when he was a boy. Do you know what he said: An Aztec priest!!!"

She is wrong about this. After breakfast Manningtree walks across the Park to earn, as he puts it, "the sordid daily crust." He has an excellent figure, he is presentably dressed, he has the serene, dummy-like carriage that would delight any tailor. She is wrong about his wanting to be an Aztec; that was years ago, before the war. He has moved southward since then, across Panama, down the Andes. He is with the Incas, these days. After a few hundred yards, his face attracts attention from passers by. It has begun to move. It is dramatising certain arguments about the Virgins of the Sun. He is going over their chief temples, their convents set apart from the Inca towns. He arrives eventually at Macchu Picchu. One hundred female skeletons have been found at that Inca hide-out—were they Virgins of the Sun or were they Manco II's concubines or simply Indians who had fled with him from the Spaniards? Manningtree has doubts. He smells a mystery and his blue eyes go very small. The only way to clear it up is to go back to the 16th century. He does this. He has got out of Cuzco unobserved by the Spaniards and although he knows the Inca roads well, the stone causeways six feet wide, scratched on the sides of the Andes or choked by the jungle, he also knows that the only safe, secret way is to go by the Urabamba river. He sets off, with a machete—but back he has to come because an old, old difficulty has arisen. How is he dressed? How is he disguised? At this word, the artfulness of his face is so blatant that children fifty yards away think he is going to eat them.

Alas, Manningtree has now to postpone the answer. He has arrived. He straightens his face and goes into a doorway marked *Staff Only*, in the Hildegarde Memorial Museum.

This Museum had been the white elephant of the city for two generations. The Council would have liked to have sold it or pulled it down; they could not do so. But fashions change. Once deserted except on rainy days, the Museum is now visited by thousands of people every year.

It is a fantastic, cream-washed neo-Gothic mansion built about 1820 in the Park—which was attached to it—by an Austrian Archduke for his mistress, the 12th Duchess of Taxminster. There is a Byron story about her. After the Archduke died it was taken over, in the late 70s, by the intellectual son of the steel magnate, Rudolf Dabchild, and his crippled wife, Hildegarde Von Hochfeld-

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Mannheim, who inherited the Kreutzer fortune. These two beetle-like creatures were compulsive, voracious, indiscriminate collectors. Train-loads, van-loads of remarkable furniture, armour, Spanish choir stalls, ikons, Italian ceilings, porcelain, tapestries, pictures, weapons, costumes of all the ages, Chinese, Japanese, and Indian objects, archæological relics, and the usual cases of Polynesian masks, canoes, poisoned arrows, and stuffed birds and so on, arrived at the mansion and choked it. When Dabchild's wife died, he unloaded it on the appalled city and called it the Hildegarde Memorial Museum. Fortunately a rich Trust supported it. It was run by antiquarians originally but, lately, since the dissolution of the British Empire, people who would have been Generals or Governors of African or Indian provinces in earlier days now dominate the committee. One of these, remembering Manningtree's record in the war, got him his job. Or rather his wife did, by circulating the gossip that he was a connection of the great Manningtrees.

EVEN NOW, Bunny Manningtree won't say what he was doing in the war. He simply says he was sitting on his bottom on the Shetlands, "pooped around" for a few months in the United States and had something to do with one or two "wheezes." "No initiative," his wife says. "He let them push him into Supply." "Supplying wheezes," he apologises. The word "wheeze" comes out with a lingering, malicious glee as if he were a schoolboy who has just bought a trick glass of beer at a joke shop or written to another boy in invisible ink. All the same, bits of the war, he says, "had an interest." Up in the Shetlands, for example, he got friendly with the seals and collected moss.

Whatever it was, it was a dead-end, as far as his peace-time prospects were concerned. He stands (it must be said that is one thing he can do, stand properly; few people can) about ten yards inside the main entrance of the Hildegarde, looking at the moons of his nails.

Once or twice an old acquaintance spots him:

"Good heavens, Manningtree! What are you doing here?"

"On the strength," says Manningtree calmly. And then his other face jostles the calm one away and he narrows his blue eyes, slips his lower jaw sideways and says in a chewing, secretive, and sordid voice: "Actually—guide. I show the *hoi polloi* round. Coach parties. It's terrifying." Then his face changes and he straightens to mention the nobler aspects of his job.

"V.I.P.s too. French mayors, Siamese Ambassador, Russians."

He puts his hand to his mouth and coarsely whispers again:

"Minister of Labour last Tuesday."

"There are one or two things worth a look," he says. He leads his friends down the fantastic corridors, passing statues, Japanese paintings, Indian carvings, cases of porcelain. He comes to a door and a sly look comes on.

"Private apartments of the Archduke," he says. The friends admire.

"Hoovered three times a week," he says to the ladies. He beckons them on to the centre piece. It is, of course, the canopied bed of the Archduke.

"See the little secret staircase?" he says, nodding to a corner by the bed. He looks noble. His friends grin. He is disappointed by the blatancy of the universal reaction, especially if one of the men lags behind for a second look at the staircase and sniggers "Very convenient."

Manningtree's sinister face comes on, reprovingly. He nods to the staircase.

"That is why Bismarck tore up the Treaty." No one has any idea what he is talking about.

Afterwards as the party leaves, Manningtree shakes hands and they go off saying "Poor old Bunny."

At five o'clock he collects a book or two from the Library, goes home and after dinner he reads. Suddenly he may say to his wife:

"Here's another so-called explorer repeat-

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ing the same cock-eyed idea. No Inca in his senses would have built a fort there, where it could be dominated by any enemy outside. It wasn't a fort, it was a holy city. The rising sun strikes through the slit on the Intihuatana sun-dial."

No answer.

"Another howler," he says. "The saddle is not 10,000 feet up. I'd put it nearer 8,000."

"Perhaps it's grown since you were there," his wife says.

One Monday—Mondays are usually quiet in the winter—a foreigner comes to the Hildegarde Museum. He is a tall, well-built German with clipped grey hair, cold, wide grey eyes, straight-nosed, straight-lipped, easy in carriage. He buys a guide book at the counter, walks past Manningtree and sets off round the Museum on his own. As he passes he leaves behind him a worldly smell of cigar, caraway, and some other smell—a scent. The scent disturbs Manningtree. It makes him feel cold. Having nothing to do, he strolls off from room to room, looking for a sunny window. Once or twice he sees the foreigner in the distance. Manningtree's nose twitches. He moves to another room.

"Got it," he says at last. *"Vol de Nuit."*

The foreigner can be seen distantly through three doorways. Manningtree dreams.

"Hun. Baron, I suppose. Baltic family. Query, born Lübeck. Staff Officer in war. No, not Staff Officer. Heidelberg, Oxford. Berliner. Villa in Dahlem, pretty district. Take a bus from the Kurfürstendamm. Forget the number."

Manningtree moves on. There is more sun in the south of the building. He goes to his favourite room—ancient costumes. His mind travels.

IN THOSE DAYS, he recapitulates, the Incas must have held the roads they scratched on the mountains and they certainly had fortified places. They once shelled the Spaniards in Cuzco with white hot stones. (That, by the way, does not excuse the public rape of several hundred Virgins of the Sun.) Anyone trying to get the gen on Macchu Picchu and to see what Manco II's boys are up to, had better take to the jungle following the Urabamba through its gorges. Have to be fit, of course.

Manningtree takes to the jungle. He slips below the fortified line. He has jungle cunning. In the hot depths of the gorges he can keep alive on bananas. He finds a deserted hut and there at night he hangs his shirt over the entrance to keep out the night air of the Andes. After sixty miles on foot, swollen with bites, he is at the foot of Macchu Picchu 2,000 feet above him. Up he goes; as he gets nearer he sees a sight to shake the spirit of any man. Two bodies come hurtling through the air, pass over him and crash into the gorge. Ah ha! The High Priest has caught a couple trying to get to the Virgins of the Sun. Manningtree pauses to consider the old, old problem. How is he dressed? Inca robes? But did the Incas wear Inca robes? Didn't the Spaniards make them wear Spanish costume? And what was Spanish costume in Estremadura in the 16th century? An idea comes to Manningtree, a wheeze. Suppose he appears in Macchu Picchu dressed as he is now, in a navy blue suit with light chalk stripes, white collar, school tie? Why not? Take them by surprise, eh? Probably run away. That is exactly what happens. Men posted at the main gate make a bolt for it. He walks in and catches a boy —always ask a boy—Donde està the High Priest?—always make for a priest. Nasty sight here, by the way, two more men tied by their heels and hanging head down over the precipice—two more cases of trying to get to the Virgins of the Sun. A whole crowd of High Priests come along. They rush him. He is arrested at once. He is tried in the Court House—usual charge, Virgins of the Sun again; and, by the way, archæologists are wrong, the courtyard described as residence of Manco II is actually *below* the residence—the military fellers get out their clubs and prepare to beat him to death and then pitch his body into the gorge.

A nasty fix this but Manningtree has an answer to it. He worked that one out when he was settling the dress problem a few hours

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ago as he was climbing up the hill. Manningtree's face takes on one of its most public leers of profound cunning, visible (one would guess), but for the Andes, as far away as the Pacific Ocean.

"Oh, High Priest," Manningtree says. "Throttle down a moment. I've been having a peep at your sun-dial. Art thou not all het up about sunrise and sunset, and what-have-you—Time, in short? Am I right? Splendid! Well, let me put a little problem to you, something to think over. I come from the future. You're yesterday as far as I am concerned, I'm to-morrow. To-morrow's sun has already risen before to-day's has set. D'you follow?"

One of the enclosed Virgins of the Sun stops weaving vicuna and looks out of a window and exclaims:

"Oh Thou!"

The fellows put down their clubs and they start a pi-jaw nineteen to the dozen—not loudly, by the way. At that altitude, the air is thin and voices are soft, a curious point. Manningtree takes his opportunity and talks in signs to the Virgin of the Sun. Where does that road lead to? he signals. She replies, by signs, To the real secret city. Manningtree thought as much. He has always held that Macchu Picchu was an outpost, a decoy. He memorises her information. Never write anything down! He has always memorised everything.

The German visitor to the Hildegarde has come back to the room where Manningtree has been standing and has been watching him for several minutes. He has noticed that Manningtree is standing in front of a large glass case containing Spanish costumes and at first the German thinks Manningtree is talking to someone. Then he has the idea that since no one is visible the person must be hidden in the glass case. This does not startle him. He is alerted. He has recognised an interesting idea, a possible experience—it has, unfortunately, been used in films. He feels drawn to Manningtree and approaches him.

"Excuse me, sir," he says in rather stiff, good English, "are you by any chance the Head Director of the Museum?"

Manningtree puts on his blank face at once.

"No, I'm not, I'm sorry. Can I be of any help?"

"I wonder if you could direct me to the archæological section?" says the German. "Are you an official?"

Manningtree's nose twitches. He has smelled *Vol de Nuit* again. He has a strange, cold feeling of being carried into the past.

"Oh no," says Manningtree. "I'm just a sort of chap keeping a sort of an eye." And, in fact, he opens one eye to significant wideness.

"I beg your pardon," says the German. "You are a visitor like myself."

"Oh no," says Manningtree. "For my sins this is where I earn the daily crust. Follow me. I'll show you."

THE GERMAN stares at him; then he smiles. He remembers. He remembers what the English are like; very soon, as the text-books say, Manningtree is likely to make a joke. The German prepares himself for this. They walk in a friendly fashion across the room together, and nodding to the cases, Manningtree says in his sinister voice, "This is where we keep the *disguises*."

"The disguises?" the German repeats politely. Somewhere here, at any moment, will come the joke.

"The costumes," says Manningtree with wonderful coolness.

"Ah!" The German is relieved. The joke has been accomplished. Manningtree becomes friendly.

"Have you seen the Private Apartments?"

"Yes. Of little interest," says the German. "Just the little incident of Bismarck and the Treaty."

Manningtree is delighted. One does not often meet the man with inside knowledge. But he is still worried by the smell of *Vol de Nuit*.

"Here," he says, "this is what you want. Archæology. There are two rooms. Early British village?" Manningtree offers. "The Western lake culture?"

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"Africa?" He hesitates shyly, "Inca?"

The German shrugs his shoulders and walks brusquely forward.

"This is what I want." He opens his catalogue. "The Mayas."

Vol de Nuit! Maya! Manningtree suddenly knows something. His face closes. He had been right first go off.

"You speak English very well. You were up at Oxford?" he asks.

"Yes. I had been at Heidelberg. My family comes from Lübeck, but I live in Berlin now."

"Dahlem," says Manningtree.

"Yes," says the German warmly.

"Lovely trees. You can get a bus, I seem to remember, from the Kurfürnstendamm, I forget the number—86?"

"Interesting," says the startled German. "When were you there last?"

"Never," says Manningtree. "Not actually, ever."

"This is extraordinary," says the German.

Manningtree puts on his most asinine, blushing, apologising face.

"Always interested in places, local buses, trains. I collected time-tables at school. I used to play at running goods trains all over Europe—the world actually. Fun. Something of interest."

THE GERMAN is puzzled and takes a long look at Manningtree. He is weighing up the question of madness, for Manningtree looks very childish, stupid, his chin dropping, his mouth open. Manningtree changes the subject.

"I'm not a Maya man," he says. "I'm afraid I'll be no good to you," Manningtree apologises. "I moved on to the Incas."

"The Incas, now, they were something." Manningtree goes on. "I mean, I'm not a scholar. I just potter. The priesthood, the roads. Clever people. Time, for example. They understood it."

The German edges away.

Manningtree follows him closer.

"And another thing—how they got the information through the Andes. Two thousand miles, three more like it. No writing, no letters, no telephone—memorised it." He pauses. "What was their secret?"

His face is blameless.

"No radio," he concludes.

The German gives a sharp turn of his head. He is uncertain. Is Manningtree mad? Manningtree is now studying the cases of Mayan objects.

"Mayas are interesting too. You know them well?" says Manningtree humbly.

"Yes," said the German.

"I tried it, before the war. There were too many problems," says Manningtree. "That's why I moved out of Mexico on to the Incas. For instance, here's a thing, I bet you can tell me, the sort of detail that I get stuck in, I mean fed up with. The Palace at Mitla—you know the Palace at Mitla? I mean the second Incan palace."

"But you *do* know the Mayas!" says the German suspiciously.

"Nothing," says Manningtree. "I mean the High Priest had put the wind up the Kings and all that and the Kings got very cunning."

Manningtree begins his well-known jaw-sliding and significant eye-rollings.

"They cut three back doors so that they could nip out fast before the old boy could spot them—rather neat? The snag is—and this is where I stick—if you go to Mitla today there are no back doors. And, what's more, if you look up your Father Bourgoa you'll see he says there were six rooms. Actually there are only four. What d'you make of that?"

"Bourgoa's sources were unreliable," says the German affably. "He was repeating hearsay. What year were you there?"

"Alas and lackaday, never," says Manningtree. "Never had the wherewithal. I just go pooping around old books."

"Pooping!" exclaims the German.

"Just pooping and pottering," says Manningtree.

"Pooping—I don't understand that English word," says the German. "I have heard it . . . yes. . . ."

The German, who up to now has had

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simply a sharp, intelligent German face, like thousands of others one sees along the Baltic, suddenly has a memory and *his* face changes. He seems to put on weight as if he had just eaten too much. His cheeks swell over his jaw which fattens, tears like juices come into his eyes which nearly close and look sly. At the sight of this, Manningtree's pink face blushes, his eyes begin watering too. He also fattens. The two men stand melting in front of each other like blushing snowmen as though the temperature of the room has shot up twenty degrees.

"I envy *you* going to Mexico," says Manningtree.

"Oh I haven't been there either," says the German.

The German goes on and, for the first time, his English syntax is clumsy.

"But it is always historical that makes for you the interest? I don't think so! When we met on the night train from New York to Chicago in December 1940, was that pooping, Captain Manningtree? Were you interested in the Virgins of the Sun?"

Manningtree stares at him.

"I was a pooper, too!" shouts the German with delight, extending his hand. "Hochstadt!"

"Hochstadt!" nods Manningtree. And then he winks at the German.

"*Voil de Nuit*, a great mistake, old boy," Manningtree says. "Terrible give-away. We followed you all over the States. It clings. No offence. What are you up to now?"

The German looks humble.

"I have a small cinema," he says sadly. "Not Dahlem any more."

"*Hoi polloi*, eh? Well, I suppose," says Manningtree, "it brings in the daily crust."

And, in sympathy, he looks over the floors, walls, and ceilings of the Hildegarde Memorial Museum with disgust.

"By the way, I always wondered," says Manningtree, "how did you manage after we got your radio?"

"Like the Incas," says the German. He has got his revenge. He has made a joke.

THE HILDEGARDE Museum closes. Manningtree walks home across the Park. He tells his wife about the encounter.

"I recognised him the moment he came in," he says. "Smelt him. I didn't let on. I didn't say anything. Ah ha! I thought. Baron von Trondheim, I says to meself! I just lay low." He crouches. "I shammed dead." He closes his eyes. "Memory got busy. He recognised me too. I don't know how, deep fellow."

"I wonder!" says his wife.

"Ah," says Manningtree, screwing up one eye and rubbing a finger joint on a thoughtful tooth. "Still an agent, I think. He gave the name Hochstadt."

Manningtree's pleasures fades. He looks gloomy.

"Manningtree millions not arrived, I suppose? No. Ah well. Have to wait for another war, but I'll be past it. My memory's going. I couldn't remember the number of the Dahlem bus. Bad show."

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J. G. Weightman

The Sorbonne

Universities in Mid-Century (I)

SINCE nothing is ever quite the same in France as in England, it is not surprising that *université* does not correspond to "university," that *professeur* is never identical with "professor," and that *un étudiant* is, in many ways, quite a different being from "a student." In practically all respects, the French educational system is at variance with ours, so that the Sorbonne bears no physical, and very little psychological, resemblance to Oxford and Cambridge.

Imagine an innocent tourist going straight from the mellow splendours of our two main seats of learning to the equally famous *Quartier Latin*. In England, he has two whole towns to wander through, and each step he takes seems to set memories echoing down the centuries. He is allowed glimpses of Fellows' gardens, peers into venerable refectories, sees tall youths in sports kit nonchalantly cycling. Whatever the encroachments of modern life, he can sense that there is honey still for tea; no doubt, some bachelor recluse is burning yet with a hard gem-like flame; Matthew Arnold, Dr. Jowett, and Sir Charles' masters are all together in the same timeless dream where they see life steadily, and see it whole. The barbarian visitor can only salute respectfully from without; never, alas, will he be able to say *Et ego* . . . and so on.

The Sorbonne, by contrast, does not intimidate. It would appear terribly Redbrick, were it not a sooty grey. It is squashed in one small quadrilateral on the slope below the Panthéon. Apart from the church overlooking the courtyard, and which dates back to Richelieu, the buildings are all late 19th-century work of a totally uninspired kind. The most frequently used entrances are in the dark, narrow cleft of the Rue de la Sorbonne. Not an ivied wall, nor a blade of grass, nor a shy, gowned, cloister-haunting Fellow to be seen. Instead, a swarming mass of young people, going in and out through the archways, up and down the Boulevard Saint-Michel, filling the cheaper cafés to overflowing, dispersing with the purposefulness of children coming out of school, or combining love and study, in unequal proportion, on the uncomfortable chairs under the geometrical trees in the Luxemburg Garden across the way.

Not only is the Sorbonne frankly utilitarian; it is also as open as a market-place. You do not tip-toe round in awe, wondering what precious thoughts are being distilled in academic silence. If you follow the swarm—which you could not do in England, even at Redbrick—you find yourself carried into an amphitheatre, where no one pays any more attention to you than if you were invisible. As you sit on your austere bench and look around, you see several other elderly nondescripts scattered about the youthful audience. Obviously some people, when they have an hour or two to spare, just wander into the Sorbonne to catch up on their education. The professor enters, preceded by a porter and followed by a stenographer. Those students who are already seated rise as a mark of respect, but there is still a great deal of coming and going around the entrances. The professor pulls the

THIS *is the first in a series of articles on "Universities in Mid-Century." Among the others will be Marcus Cunliffe on Harvard, Hellmut Jaesrich on Heidelberg, and Edward Shils on Oxford.*

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microphone towards him (his lecture is being broadcast by Radio Sorbonne, a five-kilowatt station which serves the Paris area) and the stenographer raises her pencil (the lecture will be published in the series of *cours polycopiés*, or cyclostyled texts, that you can buy at any of the bookshops in the *Quartier Latin*). You then settle down to enjoy some impeccable piece of *clarté française*, delivered in a rather slow, emphatic style, that still has a marked 19th-century flavour. Most of the audience make careful notes, in green or purple ink on squared paper. The fountain-pen of the serious young man to your right is elegantly breaking down the marmorean discourse into *A, B, C, petit a, petit b, petit c*. The young lady to your left bids fair to get through her two copies of *Elle* before the end of the lecture. In the gallery, above and behind the speaker, a couple are gobbling discreetly at each other like a pair of courting pigeons. At twenty past the hour, a young man comes in with a puzzled expression and sits down; at twenty-to, he has a sudden illumination and leaves. More people come in; more people go out. The cracked, oval skylight sheds a muddy glimmer over the scene, while the professor, quoting despairing text after despairing text, analyses the anguish of the creative process. In the vast and flabby mural above the professor's head, Apollo is smirking among the naked Muses; clearly, what is being said does not apply to him. At five minutes to the hour, those who want to be at the head of the queues in the student canteens begin to slip away. At one minute to the hour, the professor comes full circle with a rhetorical flourish, and is rewarded by a gentle burst of applause.

THESE are, of course, only very superficial, first impressions—on the one hand, it may be a miner's son who is now burning with a hard gem-like flame, and on the other, the upper reaches of the French university are very exclusive—but they point to some of the fundamental differences between the academic atmospheres in the two countries. In France, the capital university is housed in very cramped quarters in the capital city. Although venerable, it has no beauty; although it upholds standards of scholarship and of clear, logical statement, it appears to be much more on a level with the life of the town than even, say, London University. You can walk in—into the Faculty of Arts, at least—from the street, and attend even those lectures which are not classed as *cours publics*. Any curious student can sample the whole range of instruction, if he so wishes. This produces the very agreeable impression of a thronged Temple of the Intellect, with many chapels, all equally accessible.[1] The explanation is simple; the Universities in France are State institutions, where anyone with the minimum academic requirements can sign on as a student for a nominal fee. In other words, the Universities, like the State secondary-schools (*lycées*), have little of the organic individuality we are used to. They are more properly thought of as administrative units in a centralised system.

In England, however much advanced education, even at Oxford and Cambridge, now depends on public money, and although dons listen hopefully to the B.B.C. news to hear if their salaries have gone up, the basic ideal everywhere is still the independent "College"—standing in its own grounds, administered by its own company of Fellows, hand-picking its students for their personal as well as their intellectual qualities, charging them something approaching a commercial rate for the training provided, forming a society with its Senior Common Room and its Junior Common Room, its regular dinners, its collective ritual, and perhaps a certain degree of religious observance; in short, an island of careful, cultured contemplation and enquiry in the midst of a naughty, untidy world.

Curiously enough, the Sorbonne owes its peculiar name to the fact that it was created in the 13th century by Robert de Sorbon to be precisely this: a college that would enable its *hôtes*

[1] Occasionally, the Dean may decree a check-up on students' cards. Some professors consider this unnecessary, and all are apparently used to seeing strange faces in their audiences. The "openness" of the Sorbonne may go even further. One lecturer told me that, a year or two ago, a student of his said she was also attending the classes of Mr. So-and-So, of whom my friend had never heard. He made enquiries and discovered that there was no such teacher on the staff. Some *licencié* with a strong sense of vocation had found a vacant nook and set up on his own, like a mediæval intellectual. I must add that several French people have refused to believe this story, but it came to me direct, from an honourable man.

This same friend occasionally gets annoyed with the movement in the hall. Once when a young lady came in late and, instead of squeezing on to the bench next to the door with a wry smile, as is the custom, clip-clopped on stiletto heels to the centre of the amphitheatre, he paused, waited until she was seated, and then said: *"Ceci posé, nous continuons. . . ."*

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and *associés* to function without disturbance from outside life:

> *Sorbonne la bonne offre libéralement à ses fils trois biens à goûter: les livres, la table et le logement; une société agréable, une règle bienfaisante, une paix pleine de béatitude.*[2]

In spite of the continual excitements of religious controversy, it may have achieved this ideal during certain periods up to the Revolution. Since then, the structure of French education has been largely Napoleonic, and the concept of the "college" has been non-existent. A law passed in 1896 made each university a separate entity, *une personne morale*, with the right to administer its own budget, but this does not give it anything like the individuality of an English university. The whole system, including the universities, is under the direct control of the Ministry, although custom and the natural prudence of governments set limits to the Minister's interventions.[3] "The Sorbonne" is simply the name given to the Arts and Science Faculties in Paris which, being at the centre of the national web, are by far the biggest in the country, and the senior in authority.

ANOTHER peculiarity of the French university system, as compared to the English, is that the most important part of the Sorbonne's function is not the awarding of degrees, because all the better jobs depend, in point of fact, on the passing of competitive examinations, which therefore eclipse the degrees, apart from the final one, the *doctorat d'Etat*, that only a handfull of people go in for in any case. Everyone sitting the competitive examinations takes the degrees, but incidentally as it were.[4] In England, we judge according to the class of the Honours degree and the university where it was obtained. Oxford and Cambridge (or Cambridge and Oxford) come first, and the "provincial" universities, including London, follow in a sort of folk-order, of which I refrain from giving my version. The French judge according to the passing of *concours*, the most important of which are set and marked by Sorbonne professors, with some help from the provincial faculties and the big *lycées*.

The first great hurdle occurs after the second part of the *baccalauréat* and consists of the *concours d'entrée* to the various *grandes écoles*, of which the two most famous are the *Ecole Normale Supérieure* and the *Ecole Polytechnique*. Any candidate who gets into one of the *grandes écoles* is made for life. He embarks upon his university career in the best possible conditions, being subsidised, fed, and housed, given special instruction and put into a kind of forcing-house with his intellectual equals. All through his career, the title of *normalien* or *polytechnicien* will probably be of more use to him than an old school or college tie would be in England. The French, until quite recently at least, have not been afraid of the conception of the *élite*, which follows from the Napoleonic idea of the *carrière ouverte aux talents*. The pupils of the various *grandes écoles* are classed

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[2] "Kind Sorbonne provides her sons liberally with three good things to be enjoyed: books, board and lodging; pleasant society, a beneficent rule and blissful peace"—a translation of some anonymous Latin verses quoted in Bonnerot's *Histoire de la Sorbonne* (1935).

[3] The method of appointment to the permanent university staff, as I understand it, is as follows. The candidate's name has to be entered on the *liste d'aptitude à l'enseignement supérieur*, of which there are two versions, *une liste large* and *une liste restreinte*. To get on to the *liste restreinte*, he normally has to have presented his *doctorat d'Etat*, or to be about to do so. Until recently, he usually had to achieve the highest distinction, which is *très bien*, awarded unanimously by the committee, and not simply *très bien, à la majorité des voix*. When a vacancy as *maître de conférences* occurs, he applies and is expected apparently to call on the professors of the Faculty, who eventually indicate to the Minister whom they would like. In the case of the Sorbonne, the Minister always complies, but in dealing with the provincial universities, he may occasionally override local preferences. The *professeurs* are senior *maîtres de conférences*, elected by the whole Faculty, and confirmed in their election by the Minister. It has been known, apparently, for a professor to be elected with his immediate colleagues in the same subject voting against him.

The initial appointment as a *maître de conférence* is always to a provincial university. Consequently, it is rare for anyone to reach the Sorbonne before the age of forty-five.

A Sorbonne professor, once appointed, is absolutely free to write what and where he likes, engage in political activity, etc. The only restriction is that he must inform the authorities if he intends to go abroad—presumably because he is considered as a national asset which might be lost to France, in the event of an international emergency.

[4] The following is a table of comparison, from the School Certificate to the Doctorate:

Baccalauréat 1re partie	Ordinary Level
„ *2ème* „	Advanced „
Propédeutique	Intermediate
Licence-ès-Lettres	B.A.
„ *-ès-Sciences*	B.Sc.
Licence d'Enseignement or Licence Libre)	(Honours or General)
Diplôme d'études supérieures	M.A., M.Sc. (by thesis or examination)
Doctorat d'université (mostly taken by foreigners)	Ph.D.
Doctorat d'Etat	No equivalent.

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as members of the national *élite* from the time they leave the *lycée*; they are expected to pass all subsequent examinations brilliantly, and usually do so.

The second great hurdle, which comes after the *diplôme d'études supérieures*, is the *agrégation*, traditionally the method by which secondary school teachers are selected.[5] Each year, the Ministry announces that a certain number of posts are vacant in each subject, and the examiners are free to accept an equivalent number of candidates. The brilliant students, including those who, for one reason or another, did not apply for, or get into, the *grandes écoles*, may pass at the first attempt.[6] Others go on trying indefinitely, while earning their living as junior teachers or in some other way. I have heard of one elderly *agrégatif* who was eventually able to send his grown-up son to look at the results for him on on the notice-board. The title of *agrégé* not only ensures full pay and eligibility for the best jobs in the *lycées*, it also opens the way to many other kinds of work, since the Ministry has power to release the *agrégé* from his obligation to teach. In fact, we might say that the *agrégation*, although not a university degree, is the real equivalent of our First Class Honours. Its difficulty accounts for the fact that the intellectual status of the secondary schoolmaster has always been much higher in France than in England, and that there has never been any official break between secondary and university education. Until recently, the only way of becoming a permanent university teacher was to take a post in a *lycée* while working on the *doctorat d'Etat*. A great deal of university teaching both in the provinces and at the Sorbonne is done by *chargés de cours*, who are *agrégés* mainly employed as *professeurs de lycée*, and lecturing to students on one or two days a week.

SINCE advanced education in France is governed in this way by national competitive examinations, instead of by a mixture of intellectual tests and social considerations as in England, various consequences follow.

In a centralised system, a teacher or student cannot have much local patriotism about his university or his school. I doubt whether any Frenchman would feel more sentimental about the Lycée Henri IV or the Sorbonne than he would about the Gare du Nord.[7] His loyalty is not to the institution but rather to his classmates (*camarades de promotion*) and to some particular teacher; he will often preface a remark with the phrase: *"Mon vieux maître, un Tel, nous disait toujours...."* The pupils of each of the *grandes écoles* form a kind of freemasonry, which is however based on a sense of equality rather than on school-spirit or college memories. I have come across something approaching the traditional English attitude only in references to Catholic schools, for instance in Henry de Montherlant's volume of essays, *La Relève du Matin*.

But the essential result, as I see it, is that the distinctive national intellectual training is given (or was given, until recently) not at the university but in the senior classes of the *lycées*. As I have already mentioned, there is fusion between the staffs of the universities and of the secondary schools. Also, pupils may be so advanced in their last years at school that they attend the local university and pass three of their four *certificats de licence* before they are really "students" in our sense. There is nothing surprising about this. Competition for entry into the *grandes écoles* is so intense in the two highest classes of the *lycées* (*première-vétérans* and *première supérieure*, but usually referred to by the slang expressions, *hypokhâgne* and *khâgne* for the Arts Sixth and *hypotaupe* and *taupe* for

[5] The Sorbonne handbooks still give the *Licence d'enseignement* as the necessary qualification for teaching in secondary schools, but in fact, for a long time now, something more than the *licence* has been felt to be necessary, except for junior posts.

[6] The *Ecole Polytechnique* has its own *concours de sortie* which functions as an *agrégation*.

[7] The various French people who have kindly read the typescript of this article have reacted differently to this statement. Most have let it pass without comment. One, an *agrégée d'anglais* and the daughter of a distinguished professor, wrote in the margin: "An outrageous remark, deeply shocking to the 'sentimental' feelings nine-tenths of the ex-inhabitants of the *Quartier Latin* I know have towards the Sorbonne." Another said that the Gare du Nord was perhaps rather too bleak; he would suggest the Gare de Lyon.

I may have overstated the point. There is something faintly similar to school-spirit in the attitude towards the big Parisian *lycées* and, of course, memories of student life usually have an affectionate tinge. The fact remains that nobody talks or writes about the *lycées* or the Sorbonne in the way English people talk and write about schools and Oxford and Cambridge colleges. There is a world of difference between Jules Romains' account of the Sorbonne and the Ecole Normale in *Les Hommes de bonne volonté* or Alain's reminiscences in *Histoire de mes pensées* and Sir Charles Snow's two books, not to speak of the innumerable other English literary references to school and university life.

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the Science Sixth) that the atmosphere is as serious there as it may be among English students taking Finals. I remember reading somewhere a year or two ago that a *professeur de taupe* had said to his class: *"Messieurs, les premiers de l'X ne fument pas, ne boivent pas et sont puceaux."*[8] It cannot be an accident that the most famous French teachers of the 20th century—Alain, Guéhenno, Bayet, Lavelle, and Le Senne—achieved their celebrity in the Paris secondary schools, not at the Sorbonne. The importance of the *professeur de khâgne* and of the *professeur de taupe* is so considerable that they may even show a slight contempt for the full university teacher, who has consented to become a narrower specialist and a scholar, instead of remaining a *maître à penser*, that is, an intellectual initiator. It is still true, I think, that the better French students are fully formed intellectually when they leave the *lycée*. I do not mean that they have acquired all possible intellectual principles; those who specialise in English or other foreign languages sometimes discover with astonishment at a later stage that French principles are not universally accepted. But on the whole, the university can only confirm a method already acquired and give training in research techniques. The university mind is a specialised application of the *lycée* mind, which is already of university standard. The professor uses the same form of ultra-clear, rational discourse that he employed as a secondary-school teacher; the pupil who was trained for the entrance examinations to the *grandes écoles*, even if he did not pass, is already mentally adjusted to the *agrégation*.

This means, in practice, that the Sorbonne is perhaps as much a testing as a teaching body. It certainly teaches a great deal, but with nothing like the preciseness of aim of an English university. Its real importance is that it upholds the standard of the *agrégation* and the *doctorat d'Etat*. The student's business is to organise himself accordingly. He is under little or no obligation to attend lectures or do written work. A *normalien*, for instance, seems to have a natural impulse to attend the Sorbonne as little as possible, even though it is not five minutes' walk from the *Ecole Normale* in the Rue d'Ulm. He only goes there to get an idea of the individual foibles of possible examiners, or to listen to some lecturer he happens to admire, or to make notes on a *cours d'agrégation* on behalf of himself and his fellow-students, according to an improvised rota-system. And theoretically at least, the *Vie de Bohème* can still have a great deal of adult charm for ordinary students. They have not been given "a place at the University;" they are not watched over by tutors or heads of departments and called to account if their term's work is unsatisfactory. They have "signed on" as candidates for certain examinations, and how they prepare for them and when they get through is their own affair. If he has enough strength of mind and the wherewithal, Rudolfo can live in a garret with Mimi (who in 1961 may look like B.B., but unlike B.B. is usually writing a *diplôme*), listen to a proportion of the lectures on his transistor-set, surround himself with books and *cours polycopiés* and *rapports d'agrégation*, and really get down to work on his own, with a break from time to time for discussions with his fellow-students.

It may be a Romantic weakness on my part, or the effect of nostalgic memories of France in the 'thirties, but I feel there is something to be said for this system.

HOWEVER, the account I have just given is now partly out-of-date and much too simple. The whole of French education is in a state of crisis for several reasons: the great post-war increase in population, the ever more marked drift towards the Paris area, the urge to modernise the country to keep it abreast of international developments, and the lack of money to be spent for educational purposes. In 1957, after eighteen months' investigation, the Le Gorgeu Committee worked out the minimum financial requirements of the Ministry of Education, but it is said that during the last two years the Ministry has not received some 100,000 million francs (about 80 million pounds) of the scheduled amount.

The educational needs of the country are very clearly set out in an official pamphlet, *Le Problème Scolaire*, which compares France unfavourably to some foreign countries and says in particular that steps must be taken to cope with the prospect of a total of 600,000 university students in 1970, twenty times more than existed in 1880, not quite a century ago. The increase in numbers at all levels has blurred the old pattern of primary, secondary, and higher education, each with its appropriate methods of recruitment. Social changes, too,

[8] "Gentlemen, those who come out top for the *Ecole Polytechnique* do not smoke, do not drink, and are virgins."

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although perhaps less dramatic in France than they have been in England, are the cause of some shifts in emphasis. It is generally said that the primary school teachers (*instituteurs*), who used to be the backbone of the Left-wing, anti-clerical rationalism, are not so well qualified as they were and have lost some of their sense of mission, so that there is no longer the same severe training in the three R's. Similarly, there are constant complaints that the standard of secondary education is going down, and this is why the *année de propédeutique*, or intermediate course, has been introduced at the universities—to the indignation of many people, who maintain that it should have been organised at the secondary-school level. Certainly, a smaller proportion of *professeurs de lycée* than formerly are *agrégés*, with the result that those who are, now tend to call themselves *professeurs universitaires* to distinguish themselves from the rest.[9] It might be suspected that the Government is unwilling to increase the number of posts because of the expense of paying more *agrégés* at the full rate. Actually, the opposition comes from the Sorbonne itself, since the examiners declare that they cannot provide the numbers asked for, without going below the level they consider essential. A very typical comment is that of M. E. Souriau, a Sorbonne professor, who was responsible for the report on the *agrégation de philosophie* in 1957:

> *Le jury, malgré son désir de trouver le plus grand nombre d'agrégés possible pour répondre aux besoins de la situation présente, n'est pas moralement libre d'y arriver par le moyen d'une dévalorisation complète du titre d'agrégé, ce qui eût été le seul moyen d'y parvenir... l'agrégation doit rester dans son principe ce précieux moyen de détection d'une élite qu'elle constitue encore...*.[10]

The solution, so far, has been to fall back more heavily on a subsidiary competitive examination, the C.A.P.E.S. (*Certificat d'aptitude au professorat de l'enseignement secondaire*). A number of students who do well at the end of their *année de propédeutique* are admitted to the I.P.E.S. (*Institut de préparation à l'enseignement secondaire*), which means, in fact, that they become salaried officials while preparing for the C.A.P.E.S. They, of course, have to attend lectures and pass their examinations punctually, because the State has invested money in them; they are perhaps more closely tied than English students who receive education grants.

I HAVE MENTIONED these administrative details, because of their possible spiritual importance.

The *agrégation* is ceasing to be, in the first place, a means of selecting secondary school teachers, although it is still the key to the best secondary-school jobs. Some Sorbonne professors have even queried whether it should be maintained in its present form. It seems to me an excellent institution, but I wonder whether the present working of the system is not going to have a bad effect. Now, much more than before the war, the aim of those *agrégés* who are attracted to university work or to pure research is to avoid secondary-school teaching as much as they can. Three courses are open to them, if they are lucky: they can become *assistants* in a university, that is temporary lecturers for a period of four or five years; they can be supported by the *Centre national de la recherche scientifique*; or they can become part of a French cultural establishment abroad. Each of these possibilities leaves them much freer to devote themselves to the great labour of the *doctorat d'Etat* than would be the case in a *lycée*, with fourteen hours' teaching and a certain amount of marking to do every week.[11] This new tendency is very understandable, but if it means that, eventually, most university teachers will not have spent the early part of their career in a *lycée*, one of the great virtues of the old system will have been lost. The fusion between *lycée* and *faculté* meant that the *élites* created by the national competitive examinations were constantly being ploughed back into

[9] Their full title is *agrégés de l'université*, one meaning of *université* being the whole body of State teachers, not simply university teachers, in our sense.

[10] "The examiners, in spite of their desire to create as many *agrégés* as possible to meet the needs of the present situation, are not morally free to achieve this result by a complete devaluation of the title of *agrégé*, which would have been the only course to take... the *agrégation* must remain, basically, the valuable method of detecting an *élite* that it still is..."

Here are some figures for 1959:

In German, there were more *agrégés* than posts: 72 successful candidates and only 45 vacancies.

However, in some other subjects, the situation was critical.

English: vacancies 190, *agrégés* 109.
Letters (French, Latin, Greek): vacancies 165, *agrégés* 71.
Physical Sciences (Women): vacancies 80, *agrégées* 36.
(In the case of the Physical Sciences, the report does not seem to give the number of posts for men, but only 50 of the 164 male candidates passed.)

[11] At the university, an *assistant* lectures five hours a week, a *maître de conférences* five, and a full professor three. In a *lycée*, a *professeur d'hypokhâgne* does ten hours, and a *professeur de khâgne* eight, but this is very exacting work.

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the mass, as it were. If a majority of them are going to go directly into university work, the *lycées* will not have the benefit of their presence, and they will not have the human experience of teaching in a school.

It may be another Romantic notion on my part, but I feel that in the utopia to which all societies should tend, there would be no rigid dividing line between the staffs of the primary, the secondary, and the higher streams. In France, since the Revolution, there has always been a gap between secondary and primary, corresponding roughly to the cleavage between the bourgeoisie and the rest, although the children of primary-school teachers traditionally became secondary-school teachers and often university professors. But much more so than in England, there has always been, at all levels, a myth of "the teacher," *le maître*, the exemplary intellectual who takes it upon himself to think and speak in the name of mankind.

Simone de Beauvoir somewhere makes the significant remark that her imaginary hero, during girlhood, was not a duke or a conventionally powerful person, but a great teacher. Alain, in one of his early letters to his friend Elie Halévy, goes even further and takes the extreme view that there should be no scales or grades in teachers' salaries and that it is immoral on the part of a teacher to think of "making a career." The teacher, he says, is not a civil servant (which he is, of course, technically in France)—

> ... *le professeur n'est pas un* fonctionnaire, *c'est-à-dire, un salarié, mais un homme* libre *qu'on indemnise, qui est* nourri aux frais de l'Etat, *comme citoyen particulièrement utile.*[12]

Such lay fervour may now seem naïve and out-of-date, and in its pure form it was never widespread. Yet I think it has always been secretly respected, even by careerists, and that it helps to account for the intellectual ozone so noticeable in the French atmosphere. At the moment, there is a dilemma: on the one hand, the standard of the *agrégation* must be kept up and, on the other, there are not enough *agrégés* to go round. But it would be a pity if a new sort of class division developed in French education, and weakened the idealistic temper of the whole.

NONE of the people I know would admit to being worried by this possibility, so it may be a groundless fear on the part of a foreign observer. What students and staff are vocal about is the lack of funds and the overcrowding in Paris. Student strikes have occurred during the last few years and there have been violent complaints in the French press.

Obviously, the average French student, while he enjoys comparative freedom, is not so well off as his English counterpart, particularly in Paris. He has cheap restaurants, reductions on rail fares, and special rates in theatres but, generally speaking, financial help seems to be much less generous than it is here, so that a far greater proportion of students (43 per cent, according to one source) have to earn their living at the same time as they pursue their studies. Lecture-rooms, library facilities, and laboratory space are all inadequate. The Faculty of Medicine has been provided with a new building, and the Sciences will eventually be re-housed, leaving the present Sorbonne premises entirely to the Arts Faculty, but this is a long-term project which keeps running into administrative difficulties. Living accommodation is not easy to find; the admirable *cités universitaires* cannot hold all the students, and the housing problem is far more acute in Paris than it is even in London. *L'Express* tells the pathetic story of students reduced to sharing rooms, Box and Cox-wise, with night-workers. The teacher-student ratio is much lower in France than in England or America. Counting not only regular professors but all auxiliary instructors, there was, in 1957, one teacher to every 150 students in Arts, one for every 53 in Science, and one for every 123 in Medicine. It is true that an effort has been made to approximate to the Anglo-Saxon or German conception of "seminar-work" by organising *groups de travaux*, under the direction of an *assistant* or a *chef de travaux*.[13] A group, in the Sorbonne sense, may include as many as 40 students. Given the numbers, the amount of written work is bound to be limited.

I was told of one disillusioned young Englishwoman, now married to a Frenchman and taking a degree in Paris, who had handed in two proses and an essay since the beginning of the session and had been unable to recover any of them; the pile of corrected work is left on a

[12] "... he is not a salaried official, but a *free* man who is paid an allowance, who is *fed at the expense of the State* as being a particularly useful citizen" (Letters for 1895). *Correspondance avec Elie et Florence Halévy* (Gallimard, 1958).

[13] A new development is the appointing of secondary-school masters in the last phase of their careers as *chef de travaux* in the universities.

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table to be picked up and less scrupulous students take any piece that has obtained a good mark, since it is likely to be useful. Only in a number of advanced classes, personally conducted by the professors, does the teacher-student relationship exist in our sense, and perhaps there the standard is higher than we normally achieve, because of the dialectical skill of the French; the advanced classes in certain *Instituts* are, I feel, the *khâgnes* and the *taupes* of the university.

Naturally enough, in these conditions, a lot of young people who "sign on" at the university fall by the wayside; how many exactly, it is difficult to say, because some stop for a while, then start again later. I was given the semi-official figure of 25 per cent for the annual "wastage" in the Faculty of Arts at the Sorbonne. The estimates in *L'Express* are more sensational: in 1958, the paper says, only 30 per cent of first-year students passed the end of session examination and, generally speaking, only 25 per cent of Arts Students "complete their courses in the normal manner" (which means, presumably, finish the *licence* in three years); the "wastage" in the Sciences, according to *L'Express*, reaches nearly 60 per cent.

To someone who knows how carefully students are now looked after in English universities, these facts may seem to add up to an alarming indictment of the French situation. It is undeniable that a great deal more money ought to be spent, and no doubt would be, if the Algerian War were brought to a close. At the same time, the French have a different system, which has to be taken on its own terms. It may be a good thing that anyone with the initial qualifications should be able to "sign on" for next to nothing, instead of having to "apply for a place" and commit himself to a course. There are arguments in favour of combining a certain amount of wage-earning with study; it makes for self-reliance and seriousness. Perhaps it is better that the weaker and less interested students should drop out, of their own accord, after a taste of university work, than that they should be coaxed on to take a qualification for which they are not fully suited. It may be more humane, more in keeping with the variety of student temperaments, to allow several shots at the *agrégation* instead of one attempt, and one only, at a First. At the university level should there be the insistence on *teaching*, in the more practical sense, that we now tend to favour, and that some French people are beginning to think necessary?

Is the function of the university mind not rather to investigate and expound, on the one hand, and to defend certain standards of attainment, on the other? From our point of view, I suppose, more than half of French students are "part-time" or even "external," but if their secondary-school training has been serious and they themselves are adult, they are not necessarily the worse for this, as anyone who has done night-school work, or dealt with ex-servicemen, knows.

The French system could be made, financially, more comfortable, but if adequate personal grants were given liberty would have to be curtailed, as it is here, to the extent of making sure that public money was not wasted. I personally should like to see the French independence of the student combined with far better accommodation and library facilities. The French system is probably least defensible as regards science, which requires full-time practical work, but the authorities appear to be aware of this, since all governments are now, through force of circumstance, scientifically-minded. Some members of the Arts staffs are even afraid that, before long, the scientists will get such preferential treatment that academic solidarity will be imperilled.

As for the overcrowding in Paris, it is a consequence of the centralised system that the authorities have tried to react against. According to the figures for 1957, 40 per cent of the national total of Arts students and 33 per cent of Science students were concentrated in the capital, although France boasts sixteen other universities, including Algiers. The convergence begins at the secondary-school level, since parents are convinced that a pupil has a better chance of getting into the *grandes écoles* if he does his last two years in one of the big Parisian *lycées*, such as *Henri IV* and *Louis le Grand*. So strong is this conviction, which is, indeed, justified by statistics, that families will even try to move to Paris at the appropriate stage in the pupil's career. All the *grandes écoles* being situated in or near Paris, the successful provincial candidates are, in any case, drained off to the capital. Technically, then, all the most brilliant students are in Paris. Also, the professors there are considered as the senior members of the national university staff and as the people in charge of the *agrégation*. A student

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who has taken his *licence* and his *diplôme* in the provinces will often prepare for the *agrégation* in Paris, because he thinks he will have a better idea there of the standard required and of the kind of question that will be asked. Permission to transfer his dossier to Paris is normally granted. Also, he almost invariably has a relative in Paris who can either put him up or act as a point of family contact.

Family feeling has weakened but it is still stronger than in England; the French do not seem to have the conviction that it is "a good thing to get away from home," and this is an additional reason why it rarely occurs to a Frenchman to go to a provincial university in another provincial area, whereas with us, the need to obtain a place sends some southerners North and brings some northerners South, and families consider the displacement as part of the educational process. Students preparing for both the *licence* and the *agrégation* (or the C.A.P.E.S.) may travel rather than leave home. They shuttle back and forth every week between Lille, Dijon, Caen, Poitiers, and Paris, instead of attending the local university. The attraction of Paris is so great that professors, *maîtres de conférences* and *assistants* appointed to these relatively nearby towns will live in the capital and travel down to their university for two or three days a week to give their lectures. Trains bearing professors in one direction and students in the other must pass on the outskirts of Paris.

The Government's problem is to overcome the ingrained feeling that there is no salvation outside Paris.

Since the war, it has been comparatively generous in its grants to the local universities and has tried to turn some of them into centres for specialisation. There is talk of moving the *Ecole Centrale* and the *Ecole des Mines* to the provinces. Such changes are perhaps easier to achieve in the Sciences, because new establishments can be equipped from scratch with the latest apparatus, whereas the Arts people claim that they need to be near the big Parisian libraries. The argument seems unconvincing to me, because all the work necessary up to the level of the *agrégation* should be possible with an averagely good modern library. Perhaps the preparatory work for certain *agrégations* could be concentrated in one or other of the big provincial towns; perhaps—to make a blasphemous, but ruthlessly Napoleonic suggestion—the *Ecole Normale* and the *Ecole Polytechnique* could be transplanted and thus revitalise some provincial universities. Or again, if the Government eventually adopts something approaching the English system of a living allowance for all students, supervision will become closer and it will be easier to direct students to particular centres. But nothing in the present atmosphere suggests that this will be done. It would take a very strong government to decree that students should compete for "places" and that professors should reside in the provincial towns to which they are assigned, and the result might simply be the turning of Paris into one large *grande école*, with the other university centres ranged in a descending order of merit according to their size and their distance from Paris. The most likely possibility is that the Sorbonne will expand and perhaps break up into two or three units within the Paris area. Yet it seems reasonable to suppose that an imaginative Minister could take advantage of the link between the *lycées* and the *facultés* to react against the magnetic force of Paris.[16]

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After this rapid sketch of the material organisation of the French universities, I must move on to the question: what is the intrinsic nature of French academic work, and how does it compare with ours?

Perhaps the most striking feature of French education at all levels is its reliance on rhetoric, in the good sense of the word. If I can allow myself one of those large generalisations which ought only to be made with apologies, I should say that the French are "verbalists," that they trust language, believe the essential things to be sayable, and believe furthermore that they should be said. The English, on the other hand, are more complex in their attitude to language, being at once more primitive and more sophisticated; they use language as a way of hinting at feelings, relationships, and situations which

[16] In an article in *L'Education Nationale* (10th March, 1960), M. Pierre Bartoli, secretary-general of the *Académie de Paris*, argues that even if all provincial students were prevented from coming to Paris, the density of the population in the Paris area is such that the situation would not be seriously altered. However, he accepts an axiomatic that the best secondary-school pupils, as well as provincial *agrégatifs*, should want to come to Paris. He advocates the development of centres of higher education and specialised research in the provinces, and priority for the building of student hostels there.

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cannot be fully brought out into the light of day, and indeed ought not to be. On going from England to France, I always have the sensation of moving into a brighter light, both physical and intellectual. Each person you have to deal with is a beacon of clarity, at least from his own point of view, although, of course, the sum of many different clarities is not always total clarity. Each person has, more or less, got his opinions and his personality into language, so that if you know the rules of the game and are practised in it, you can establish contact immediately. But this contact may always remain "rhetorical" in a way that is puzzling to the pure Englishman; one of the most difficult things to manage in going backwards and forwards between the two countries is the different distribution of formality and intimacy since, in close relationships, the French can be more formal and more outspoken.

All this links up with their educational training. They are supposed to have knowledge—a good deal more, at the secondary-school level, than is usually considered necessary in England—but the emphasis is on presentation.

Instead of being asked to answer three questions in three hours, which is what commonly happens here, they have to write a *dissertation*, that is, a carefully organised essay, in four, or perhaps seven, hours. In one respect, this makes examinations rather more of a lottery in France than they are in England. A good candidate may have mastered a fair proportion of the syllabus and be unable to show his knowledge because the question concerns the remaining part. Almost always, a number of candidates leave the examination-room as soon as the subject has been read out. On the other hand, it is within the bounds of possibility for a lucky candidate to get a high mark after studying only a fraction of the syllabus. It has even been known for candidates with great dialectical skill to pass brilliantly through the artful concealment of ignorance. Also, for both the *licence* and the *agrégation* there is a decisive oral examination, so that it is practically impossible in France for any tongue-tied person to graduate.

THE HESITANT, GROPING, OBSCURE, and perhaps very original mind is at a disadvantage. A number of French writers almost qualify as "failed B.A.'s" because the proficiency necessary for the *agrégation* was contrary to their natures. Conversely, it may be dangerous for a creative writer to be an *agrégé*; in Giraudoux, Jules Romains, Sartre, and Simone de Beauvoir, the *leçon d'agrégation* or *corrigé de dissertation* occasionally show through.

Having had national, competitive examinations for so long, the French are well aware of their margin of error. It is still quite common for a *licence* or *agrégation* paper to be marked by one examiner only, on the ground that all judgments are subjective in detail and that the single examiner's temperament is part of the operation of chance in the same way as the single essay question. However, this does not produce the vagaries that might be expected. Whatever the variety in individual opinions, or even in levels of intelligence, the training is so vigorous and prolonged that it produces a more uniform type of intellectual behaviour than English school and university life. The Sorbonne includes people of very different intellectual tendencies—Catholics and Communists, modernists and classicists—but as you listen to Radio Sorbonne, you gradually come to feel that all the disembodied voices are one voice, the voice of a single universal intelligence classifying the whole of creation according to the traditional norms of clear exposition.

THAT this is not a fanciful impression is proved by the tenor of the *rapports d'agrégation*, which make delicious reading if you are sensitive to the voluptuousness of academic precision. Some of them quote, and all are based on, Boileau's dictum, which could be inscribed above every educational establishment in France and is engraved on every truly French heart:

Ce que l'on conçoit bien s'énonce clairement.

Even in science, style is an important consideration. The examiners of the *agrégation des sciences physiques* (1959) stress in at least three places in their reports that mental agility and elegance are as necessary as knowledge. In discussing the oral lesson, for which candidates have access to books, they even go so far as to say:

Un excès de documentation est toujours nuisible. S'il n'est pas utilisé dans la leçon, son élaboration a fait perdre au candidat un temps précieux qu'il aurait employé plus utilement à réfléchir, composer, préparer. Utilisé, il alourdit la leçon et la déséquilibre le plus souvent, car il a toutes les chances de porter sur quelques points particuliers.

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Il aboutit à masquer sous les détails les idées générales qu'il aurait fallu faire ressortir.[15]

As might be expected, the emphasis on achieving a proper relationship between general and particular ideas is even more pronounced in the Arts subjects. Also, the reports categorically reject the facile use of contemporary Marxist or Existentialist language, and will have no truck with literary fashions. Although "obscure" writers are now very popular subjects for academic study, they have to be dealt with in terms of a clarity that they themselves might not have appreciated. In particular, analytical writing must not be confused with pseudo-literature; the candidates presenting English are attacked on this score:

Qu'il y ait ambiguité dans l'utilisation que fait Shakespeare de ses thèmes principaux, nul ne le contestera: mais le candidat à l'agrégation n'est, en tant que tel, ni poète ni dramaturge; son devoir est de demêler l'écheveau de cette ambiguité et non de l'installer au sein de son développement pour jouer avec elle, à loisir.... On devait éviter à tout prix de se tenir dans cette zone floue, intermédiaire, où les mots sont à double entente, renoncer à cette mosaïque verbale qui en peinture relèverait de l'impressionnisme ou du pointillisme, admettre une fois pour toutes que dans une dissertation d'agrégation un paragraphe renferme une idée, une seule, exprimée clairement.[16]

I HAVE FORGOTTEN WHO SAID that a Frenchman is "a gentleman with a ribbon in his buttonhole who keeps asking for more bread." This is no longer quite true; if he is old enough to have a ribbon in his buttonhole, he usually asks for *biscottes* and brings out a little box (if he is really smart, a charming 18th-century silver snuff-box) of pills to take at the end of the meal. But the sign of an educated Frenchman, whether he asks for bread or not, is that he thinks instinctively in terms of the transitions from one general idea to the next, and of the illustration of general ideas by particular examples. Frenchmen can at times be fey and whimsical; some *normaliens*, especially, have a rather mad sense of humour, but you know that the maddest of them could, at the drop of a hat, write a *dissertation* in three parts, with an appropriate introduction and conclusion on the differences between English humour and French wit. A completely trained Frenchman, we might say, never has an idea or an experience without putting it automatically into some general intellectual context.

This sounds like the perfect academic reflex, and indeed there is perhaps no more accomplished mind than the trained French mind. But, in France as elsewhere, while the Sciences are apparently developing with confidence, some of the Arts subjects are going through an internal crisis, so that the superb assurance of the *rapports d'agrégation* may, to some extent, be deceptive.

ANY attempt to assess the present state of studies in the various departments of the Sorbonne would far exceed my commission and my abilities. With regard to most subjects, I can only give very general impressions, but it certainly seems clear that Sciences are in better shape than Arts.

On the science side, such criticism as there is mostly concerns the material organisation of work, particularly team-work, and could be met by the granting of larger funds. Only in the case of medicine are the attacks levelled at the quality of the work done. It has often been pointed out in the last two or three years that America does not recognise French medical qualifications, and it has been repeatedly asserted by journalists, students, and some professors that the whole system of French medical studies needs to be overhauled to bring it up-to-date and to eliminate the suspicion of nepotism in the choice of students for the better openings.

Another complaint, in a different department, is that the study of economics has been retarded by the fact that it grew up inside the Faculty of Law. However French technical experts are

[15] "A lesson is always spoiled by too much material. If the material is not all used, the candidate has wasted time working it up, when he would have been better employed in thinking, writing, and preparing his demonstration. If it is used, it overloads the lesson and in most cases destroys the balance, because very likely it concerns only certain particular points. Its effect, in the end, is to hide the general ideas that ought to have been brought out, under a mass of details."

[16] "That there is ambiguity in Shakespeare's use of his main themes, no one will deny: but the *agrégation* candidate is not, as such, either a poet or a dramatist; his duty is to unravel the tangled skein of ambiguity, not to plant ambiguity itself in the heart of his writing, in order to toy with it at leisure.... He has, at all costs, to avoid remaining in that blurred, intermediate area where words have double meanings, eschew that verbal mosaic-work which, in painting, would be linked with Impressionism or Pointillism, and recognise once and for all that in a *dissertation d'agrégation* a paragraph contains one idea, and one only, clearly expressed."

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very conscious of this deficiency and have done a great deal in recent years both to bring the study of economics into line with parallel developments in England and America and to popularise the idea that economics is part of the technical equipment essential for the modernisation of France. These two reservations having been made, it is probably true to say that, in the Sciences, there is no basic intellectual problem. Whatever moral issues scientific discoveries may raise, there is no scientific task that could not be enthusiastically pursued, if capital were available.

In the Arts, some uneasiness can be detected. The *Faculté des Lettres* has re-christened itself *Faculté de Lettres et de Sciences humaines* to make a concession, it is said, to the ever-increasing fascination of the scientific approach. It is a pity that some other term was not used, because *sciences* in *sciences humaines* cannot have the same meaning as in *sciences physiques*, and the acceptance of such an ambiguity may, in itself, be alarmingly symptomatic.

Many people have said to me that in spite of, or because of, the maintenance of high standards of scholarship, the prestige of the teacher, at all levels, has declined. The modern impatience with humanistic, as opposed to scientific, scrupulousness can be felt in France as elsewhere. The title, *professeur en Sorbonne* has lost something of its magic and is not an automatic guarantee of respect. When a professor is famous throughout the country, as is the case, for instance, with Raymond Aron, most readers of his books and articles may simply be unaware of the fact that he is at the Sorbonne, a situation which would have been impossible in the 19th century. Excellent work is done, of course, in classical scholarship, linguistics, history, and many other disciplines, without any name being particularly well known outside specialist circles. When I asked a professor of moral philosophy in a provincial university to cite the outstanding people at the Sorbonne in any subject, Aron was mentioned, then Merleau-Ponty (actually at the Collège de France), but after that no one else as having any immediate impact on general intellectual life. This is only one view, of course; however, it confirms the often expressed impression that the Sorbonne is not as grand as it used to be. If the prestige of the French Academy had not varied so much and election to it not been affected by extraneous political considerations, it might have been instructive to see at what periods Sorbonne professors had the highest proportion of membership.

Two disciplines which seem to be in particular trouble are philosophy and literary studies. For some time now, they have been facing the crucial task of self-definition. The study of philosophy in the senior classes of the *lycées* has always been a distinctive feature of French education and is one of the causes of the generalising tendency I have noted. Now there is a drift away from philosophy to the sciences or to sociology and psychology. In some schools, apparently, the traditional *classe de philo* has ceased to exist, and I was given to understand that young scientists, particularly at the Ecole Polytechnique, are very impatient with what they consider to be the unrealities of philosophical discussion.

In England, we are now familiar with the idea that philosophy, which was originally the name for all intellectual functioning, is in danger of becoming the name for nothing at all. What is it, with us, at the moment? A pseudo-science of language which longs to turn itself into the real science of language? I am not competent to judge, but I think I am right in saying that the only person in France who has repeatedly queried the validity of traditional philosophy is Paul Valéry, who was neither a philosopher nor an academic.[17] With some decrease in confidence, French philosophy continues to be, on the whole, metaphysical, and considers English philosophy to be now practically non-existent.

I wonder how many Sorbonne professors, apart from one or two specialists, have read the English philosophical works of the last thirty years. How many English philosophers know the names of their colleagues at the Sorbonne? Supposing we could abolish the language difficulty, would any English philosopher pass the *agrégation* or any French philosopher get a First? It is strange that the discipline which is technically the most general should, on both sides of the Channel, have an air of provinciality. There must be something wrong here that would deserve much more investigation from both sides than it has yet received.[18]

[17] See his *Cahiers*. A brilliant anti-philosophical squib, *Pourquoi des Philosophes?*, was brought out two or three years ago by an *agrégé de philosophie*, J.-F. Revel.

[18] An Anglo-French philosophical meeting took place at Royaumont a few years ago, but the verbatim report has never been published. Perhaps

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As regards the study of literature, one minor controversy has been settled; the classical languages have lost ground to some extent, although not as much as in England. Henceforth, there will be an *agrégation des lettres modernes*, which means that students will be able to specialise in French literature, while having only a subsidiary knowledge of Latin. In the *agrégation des lettres*, French, Latin, and Greek have to be taken to the same level. Questions of comparative literature will, no doubt, eventually be included in the new modern *agrégation*.[19]

The major question is: should the university study of literature be mainly historical or should it be critical? To which we can add: if it is critical, should it be mainly expository or normative?

About the present state of affairs, there can be little doubt. The historical trend is still the dominant one, although a new tendency appears in the work of two or three professors—Etiemble, Nadal, and Blin, for instance.

Since I have held strong views on this issue ever since I was a student in France, I may as well state my attitude at once, and then try to defend it. The bee that has long buzzed in my bonnet droned more insistently last year as I listened to some lectures and studied some of the recent pronouncements of Sorbonne professors. I believe that all study of literature should be based on the attempt to define and justify value judgments and that historical investigation, the preparation of learned editions, structural analysis, etc., although essential, are ancillary occupations. This opinion is not, in itself, original or eccentric; it is the majority, perhaps the unanimous, opinion in literary circles; but in France, more so than in England, there is a gap between literature and the university study of literature. Academic scientists and historians are comfortably conscious of being at the peak of their subjects; so are the philosophers, although they may not be quite sure what their subject should be. But academic specialists in literature live in a world of their own which is largely cut off both from contemporary literature and from contemporary criticism.

It is easy to see how this situation has arisen. Gustave Lanson (1857–1934) initiated the "scientific" study of French literature, at a time when English professors of literature still tended to be "gentlemanly amateurs," of the sort that F. R. Leavis reacted against so strongly. Lanson himself had opinions; his condemnation of Baudelaire accounts for his unjustified reputation in literary circles as a totally benighted pedant. But he felt that value judgments were too uncertain to be a reliable basis for enquiry. He wanted to make the university investigation of literature "scientifically" respectable, and he succeeded to such an extent that, even now, the academic study of French literature in England is nearer to his tradition than it is to the critical tradition of Leavis, Richards, Eliot, and Empson. M. Rudler, the late Maréchal Foch professor at Oxford, was a disciple of Lanson's and even more Lansonian than his master. Because of the "historical" trend, the thesis for the *doctorat d'Etat* became longer and longer until now, ten years is considered a reasonable time to spend on it (and as Etiemble irrefutably pointed out to me, ten years is almost one-seventh of the normal expectation of life).

A system in which, after the *agrégation*, ten years' personal research is demanded as the condition for a permanent university appointment seems admirably austere, and one could have nothing but applause for it, if the research were always useful. Some ingenious minds—Etiemble himself, for instance, who has published two volumes on *Le mythe de Rimbaud* and Raymond Picard, the author of *La Carrière de Jean Racine*—have got over the difficulty by producing what are, in fact, historico-sociological studies, and there have been other, very good theses. But many literary specialists devote themselves to work which is neither criticism, nor history, nor sociology; I think it can only be defined as the rigid application of the historical method to details about literature, which are fully connected neither with literature nor with history. This follows logically from Lanson's attitude, which boils down to saying that since value judgments are difficult to handle, just as life is difficult to handle, we should kill the body and methodically investigate it when it is dead. I often feel that "scientific literary historians," in their preference for the inanimate and the stable, are living

I should add that I am referring only to "pure" philosophy; in the philosophy of science, the French are very conscious of the work being done in England.

[19] Etiemble, one of the most vigorous controversial minds at present at the Sorbonne, expounds his view of the new *agrégation* in *L'Education Nationale* (25 February, 1960).

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on 19th-century conceptions of science and history, which no longer correspond to the real attitudes of scientists and historians, and certainly have no link with the actual behaviour of writers.

HERE ARE ONE OR TWO EXAMPLES. The *Revue de l'Enseignement Supérieur* not long ago brought out a special number on the study of literature (No. 1, 1959), which contains many excellent points and, as might be expected, is a model of academic writing. The article on literary history, *Qu'est-ce que l'histoire littéraire?* is contributed by M. Antoine Adam, one of the most distinguished Sorbonne professors. He scores some palpable hits in dealing with fashionable critics, who make great play with psychological, philosophical, and political notions and quite often simply get their facts wrong. At the same time, he admits that the previous generation of literary historians wasted a lot of energy pointlessly discussing influences and trends, instead of dealing with the work in hand. Literary history, he says, is only legitimate if it transcends history, that is, if it illuminates the work in question as a work of literature. But it is obvious, from the tenor of his article, that he is still very close to the Lansonian attitude. He can only conceive of advanced study as being research into "facts." He refers rather slightingly to critical *diplômes* as *essais*, which however good are bound to be superseded by others, whereas a "historical discovery," once made, remains for all time. He quotes two instances, of what he considers first-class work:

> *On a vu telle étudiante dépouiller systématiquement la presse théâtrale de l'époque de Balzac pour y retrouver les traits, les mots, les allusions qui pouvaient éclairer les figures d'actrices de* La Comédie Humaine, *et la moisson des faits recueillis dépassa ce qu'il était raisonnable de prévoir. Telle autre a lu tout ce qu'il était possible de lire sur le monde de la police et celui de la pègre entre 1820 et 1845, et cette lecture attentive et intelligente a révélé sur les méthodes de travail de Balzac des faits jusqu'alors insoupçonnés.*[19]

As *exercises* in detective work and the scrutiny of texts, these two pieces of research are no doubt excellent. The mistake is to think that they have any vital connection with literature, or that they can be an end in themselves.

"But you have not read them!" M. Adam will retort. "Another typically flighty judgment!"

No, but I have read many theses and listened to many lectures of this kind. And a little further on in the same number, M. Castex, another Sorbonne professor whose beautifully rigorous method I had an opportunity of admiring at first hand, gives an example of the "learned commentary," which corresponds exactly to what these two young ladies must have done. M. Castex takes a passage from *L'Education Sentimentale*, the last interview between Frédéric and Madame Arnoux, and asks himself what connection it has with Flaubert's own experience. How far is Frédéric Flaubert, and how far is Madame Arnoux his one-time love, Madame Schlesinger? In the light of the meticulous researches made in recent years by no less than six specialists—Dumesnil, Gérard-Failly, Pommier, Digeon, Bouchard and Durry—M. Castex concludes that Flaubert used his own experience up to a point but altered it, we are not quite sure how, for the purposes of his novel. The argument is exquisitely developed and is worthy of a Queen's Counsel, but it proves nothing of any interest except that M. Castex could, without incongruity, have taken silk. And indeed the relentless French practice of traditional literary history and textual study produces something very similar to the applied legal mind.

I have often wondered why Professor Rudler, for instance, specialised in literature and not in law or legal history. What a judge he would have made! His *Michelet, historien de Jeanne d'Arc* is a magnificent over-proving of the point that Michelet was unreliable, which ends with a feeble attempt to show that he was really an "artist;" the indictment is perfect, the rehabilitation conventional and unconvincing, because Rudler has no expressed æsthetic theory or philosophy of life.[20] Such minds take literature as material to work on and treat it admirably according to certain unquestioned and largely

[19] "One woman student systematically went through the theatrical press of Balzac's day to look for details, remarks, or references that might throw light on the characters of actresses in *La Comédie Humaine*, and the harvest of facts collected far exceeded any reasonable expectation. Another read everything extant concerning the police and the underworld between 1820 and 1945 and her close and intelligent study revealed hitherto unsuspected facts about Balzac's methods of work."

[20] The Sorbonne's attitude to Michelet is puzzling. I have heard M. Pommier (now at the Collège de France) demolish Michelet's use of portraits as a basis for the estimation of character and then conclude: *"Mais que ne pardonnons-nous pas au poète?"* But he did not prove that Michelet was a poet, or show what the value of his poetry was. Surely Michelet, if he were alive now, is exactly

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external assumptions, just as the great lawyer takes the data of a crime or a case and analyses it perfectly according to the stipulations of a law that he provisionally accepts as absolute. But a work of literature is an æsthetic crime or case to which our reaction, if it is to be genuine, must be total, both emotional and intellectual. If we are not constantly reminding ourselves that judgment is the central function of the critic, it is fatally easy to think we are being "scientific," when in fact we are simply being enjoyably busy off the point and sheltering under the belief that we are dealing with a "great writer" or "contributing to knowledge." We should all, of course, being modern, prefer the study of literature to be scientific but, infuriating though this may be, the one definite scientific fact about literature and criticism is that they are not sciences. They are what the scientist himself still has to resort to if he wants to make a total human statement.

PERHAPS I am labouring a point which seems obvious. My excuse is that it is not accepted as obvious by some highly intelligent and immensely learned people at the Sorbonne. It may be that the *agrégation* sets such a premium on style and mental agility that there is an instinctive urge afterwards to insist on a long purgatorial sojourn in the realm of "facts." I cannot help feeling this to be a mistaken urge, which keeps some brilliant people out of university life[21] and makes the average university lecture less vital than the best kind of *lycée* class. Another of my Romantic dreams is of a Sorbonne peopled by *super-agrégés* arguing against each other on the highest level with conviction as well as knowledge, as Abelard refuted Anselm, or as Sartre tussled with Albert Camus.

This dream, strangely enough, was partly realised when I heard Sartre, at the invitation of a student society, give a lecture on the drama in the Grand Amphithéâtre, which was packed to the roof. He turned out to be the perfect professor. His lecture had been carefully prepared. It was written out in longhand on large sheets of paper, which he turned over regularly without ever looking at them, so full of his subject he was and so intent on improvising, around his central statements, the qualifications and tangential hints that show how a train of thought is linked to a whole philosophy of life. He spoke simply, clearly, rapidly, yet doggedly and solidly, like an expert bricklayer building up a wall in front of your eyes. He went on and on, without a pause, for two-and-a-quarter hours, so that by the end the audience, although still completely fascinated, was as collapsed and wilting as people are during the final stages of a long train journey. You felt that he might have gone on all night and had stopped only as a concession to frailer humanity.

It was a wonderful performance—the sort of lecture that ploughs up the minds of the hearers as a tractor ploughs a field. I sat next to an American professor, who said enthusiastically as we came out across the courtyard: "St. Thomas must have lectured like that." I cannot claim to be either a Sartrian or a Thomist; in fact I disagree with Sartre almost as much as I disagree with St. Thomas, and only a lack of stamina and ability prevents me lecturing for two-and-a-quarter hours to explain exactly how and why. But I must admit that, in a long career of lecture-going, I have never heard anything which corresponded more completely to my conception of what a lecture on a non-scientific subject ought to be.

A LITERARY friend, to whom I was expressing my renewed admiration for the style and method of the regular Sorbonne lectures I had heard and some doubts about their contents, said: *"Oui, oui, la Sorbonne—c'est la forme, l'esprit c'est quand on peut."* I should say rather that, at the Sorbonne more perhaps than in some other universities, *on peut, si on veut.* The spirit, like the wind, bloweth where it listeth, but if it were always welcomed when it blew into the academic mind, this would make a difference.

the sort of person the Sorbonne would condemn as being emotional and slipshod. Yet, M. Adam, at the end of the article I have mentioned, quotes Michelet as *un maître de l'histoire.*

[21] A new *doctorat de troisième cycle*, obtainable in two years at the minimum, is now being organised to fill the gap between the *doctorat d'université*, usually only taken by foreigners, and the *doctorat d'Etat*, which is awarded only at the Sorbonne and mainly to French academic postulants (although a number of foreigners capable of exceptional effort have obtained it). The *troisième cycle* is training in research given at the Sorbonne, the Ecole des Hautes Etudes and the Collège de France, all of which work together although they have different statutes. The shorter doctorate is intended to qualify people for permanent junior university posts as *maîtres-assistants*—an innovation which has not yet been officially ratified. It will also be a qualification for certain kinds of non-academic work. It is a very promising development, provided it can be critical and theoretical as well as historico-biographical.

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THEATRE

Mothers' Meeting

By Nigel Dennis

ALL WE THAT have felt no wish to murder our uncle and have not been told to do so by our father's ghost incline to get testy with Hamlet. "Pooh!" we say scornfully: "the duty's clear and the job only asks guts; no need to make a song and dance about it." Some of us go further and would like Hamlet to see a psychiatrist, arguing that so much vacillating is not only neurotic but bad for society as a whole: the world, we insist, is a place where sons must grow up and make decisions even when these will bring a frown from mother. So, far from conscience making cowards of us all, we are infinitely valiant and conscienceless in our judgment of Hamlet and, forgetting invariably that he ends up by doing the dirty job very thoroughly, ready to rue the day when such a softy brought decadence to the royal line of Denmark. *"For he was likely, had he been put on,/To have proved most royally,"* says Fortinbras—but as it is much too late by then to put Hamlet on anything but a tall bier, we dismiss the words as a mere gesture of politeness. Dame Rebecca West has followed Fortinbras and done her best to show that Hamlet had more than enough of the right spirit; but she has had no success and he remains our favourite self-portrait. *"Suit the action to the word, the word to the action"* Hamlet himself says; but as this is the very thing he is unable to do—his words being more fluent than his actions—we treat him as a character that lives in a void; that is to say, we disregard the awfulness of the situation in which he finds himself and pin our whole attention on the shaken mind he brings to bear upon it. We do this quite naturally nowadays, because we are so used to finding *ourselves* guilty: situations and circumstances no longer mean anything to us; we are impressed only by our weaknesses. And when we push this conception into *Hamlet* (as happens in the new Stratford production) and make of its hero an hysterical and Oedipal shrinker, we detract from the vigour of the play immediately. The tale of a brutal situation that asks the utmost of a strong young man ceases to matter or to work if Hamlet is made a ninny, just as the tragedy of Lear cannot work if the king is robbed of his royal pride and ushered in as a purely doting old dad.

Hamlet, the prince, must be seen in his tough situation and not in psychological isolation. Similarly, *Hamlet*, the play, is seen most usefully not as an unique story but as Number Three in a great line. Its two great predecessors are Homer's *Odyssey* and the second play of Aeschylus' Oresteia, *The Choephori*: a glance at these in relation to *Hamlet* cannot fail to increase the existing confusion.

THE ODYSSEY begins with Zeus feeling worried. It is his business to see the Greek conquerors home from Troy, but already one of the great warrior-kings, Agamemnon, has been ambushed by his wife, Clytemnestra, and her lover, Aegisthus (who is Agamemnon's first cousin), and brutally done to death. The murderous pair have justification for their act: Aegisthus kills to avenge his father (who was driven into madness and exile by Agamemnon's father) and to assert his right to the throne; Clytemnestra kills to avenge Agamemnon's sacrificing of their daughter, Iphigenia. These are weighty reasons, but Homer's Zeus has no sympathy with them. Only the slaughter of Agamemnon matters in *The Odyssey*—perhaps for the simple reason that the same thing must *not* happen to Odysseus.

Fortunately, Agamemnon's son, young Orestes, has hurried home from abroad and avenged his father's death by killing both Clytemnestra and Aegisthus; this has pleased Zeus immensely, but he cannot be sure that *all* sons will behave so admirably, many of them might take this sort of thing lying down. Young Telemachus, for instance, Odysseus's son, is sit-

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ting at home with scores of suitors chasing his grass-widowed mother and eating up his inheritance: does Telemachus realise that if his father is dead, a dreadful duty of revenge will fall upon him? The women, Zeus knows, can't really be depended upon: Penelope, much put on, has proved most royal so far, but so did Clytemnestra (according to Homer) until, seduced at last, she paved the way for Gertrude:

Her shall the Muse to infamy prolong,
Example dread, and theme of tragic song!
The general sex shall suffer in her shame,
And e'en the best that bears a woman's name.

So Homer, and Hamlet's rude remarks about women are best seen in this ancient light: the frailty of women in dynastic matters is traditionally highly proper and should not be confused with private neurosis and misogyny.

WE HAVE, THEN, three young men—Orestes, Telemachus, Hamlet—all faced with much the same problem of usurpation and adultery. Because Orestes comes first in legendary time and sets the example for the other two, it is interesting to deal with him first and see how he behaves. Like Hamlet (and Laertes), Orestes is in a foreign country when the crime is committed; and to him, as the Ghost to Hamlet, appears Apollo, and "chilling my heart's hot blood" instructs the young man with dreadful firmness:

"Shed blood for blood, your face set like a flint. The price
They owe no wealth can weigh." My very life, he said,
Would pay, in endless torment, for disobedience.

Ghosts (Apollo continues) are ugly creatures when they are angered and inclined just in everyday hates to bring plagues on earth that "Eat at the flesh till human shape is gone." But when "A father's blood lies unavenged," then, "the neglectful son" suffers every torment the spirits can devise:

The attacking Furies, roused by inherited blood-guilt,
Armed with arrows of the dark, with madness, false night terrors,
To harass, plague, torment—to scourge him forth from his city....
Banquet and wine, grace of libation, he may not share—
... his father's anger, unseen,
Bars him from every altar; no man may receive him
Or share his lodging; scorned, friendless and alone, at length
He lies a shrivelled husk, horribly embalmed by death.

This is the very sort of terror that the ghost of Hamlet's father is eager to wake in his son: Orestes, like Hamlet, trembles to feel it. And, like Hamlet, Orestes asks:

May I put my trust in oracles like these?
or not?

but unlike Hamlet, answers himself:

Even if I cannot trust them, yet I must do this deed.
To this one end my will is urged by many motives:
The god's command, grief for my father; and with these
Love of my patrimony, shame that my proud citizens,
Glorious in every land for the courage that conquered Troy,
Live thus enslaved....

THEY ARE STRONG WORDS, but they are not yet actions. Like Hamlet, Orestes and his sister, Electra, would rather dodge the job. Orestes begs his father's spirit to lie more comfortably; Electra harps on the unfairness of the situation and suggests that Zeus could clear things up himself if he only tried. But the Chorus is at hand to insist that children alone can and must do these murderous jobs, and their words, like Hamlet's and the Ghost's, pour out in a steady stream of hatred, stimulating the children by adding worse and worse details to the story of the soldier-king's death:

Fierce treachery against her warrior-mate
Whose brow his trembling enemies saw
Darkened with majesty and awe—

We know this figure very well, of course; it is the same frowning warrior as smote the sledded Polack—and we may add, in passing, that just as it is dramatically enfeebling to make Hamlet too weak, so is it a bad mistake to present the Ghost in anything but the majestical panoply of his earthly mightiness: a quavering voice in a dressing-gown, as supplied by Mr. Peter Wood at Stratford, not only runs counter to the lines but kills the very stimulus that the Ghost intends to whip up.

Orestes gains entry to the palace by pretending to be a tired traveller, come to tell the unsuspecting mother and step-father that Orestes is dead and can trouble them no more: they respond with the same show of sympathy and distress that Claudius, and perhaps Gertrude too, put on so readily for Hamlet's benefit. Orestes polishes off Aegisthus brusquely and without a qualm; but when it is his mother's turn to die, he hesitates. It is Pylades, who is to Orestes what Horatio is to Hamlet, who speaks the decisive words that make mercy impossible.

This, then, is the glowing example that is held up to young Telemachus as he sits brooding in his absent father's palace, hating the

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suitors and struggling to keep some vestige of his rightful authority. But *The Odyssey*, even at its grimmest, has none of the awfulness of the Oresteia or of *Hamlet*, and of all the three revenging sons, Telemachus seems the youngest in heart and sunniest in disposition. Yet the nature of his duty, and the ordering of it, must be the same for him as for the other two, and though no ghost appears to him, the goddess Athena conjures up for him the proper image of the "absent" father:

Oh, in that portal should the chief appear,
Each hand tremendous with a brazen spear,
In radiant panoply his limbs encased...
Appeared he now with such heroic port...
Soon should yon boasters cease their haughty strife
Or each atone his guilty love with life.

This image, one notes, is brought forward to the son at the moment when the suitors are making merry at the banquet-table: it reminds us that the Ghost's first appearance to Hamlet is also at the moment when the usurping Claudius:

Keeps wassail and the swaggering upspring reels:
And as he drains his draughts of Rhenish down,
The kettle-drum and trumpet thus bray out
The triumph of his pledge.

—and to both Telemachus and Hamlet this "heavy-headed revel east and west" exemplifies what the young Greek calls "the cankers of my court" and the young Dane "the fatness of these pursy times." *The Odyssey*, one may add, has a delightful frankness where money is concerned: the number of sheep and fowl, the casks of wine, that the suitors are consuming, are given much the same prominence as usurpation and attempted adultery: one feels constantly that by keeping the hall light on, the suitors are *wasting the electricity*.

Telemachus is lucky that his father is not dead, but he has to find this out by going in search of him. And if, Athena tells him, Odysseus indeed is dead:

Then let revenge your daring mind employ,
By fraud or force the suitor-train destroy,
And starting into manhood, scorn the boy.

—or, as Hamlet puts it:

Yea, from the table of my memory
I'll wipe away all trivial fond records,
All saws of books, all forms, all pressures past
That youth and observation copied there....

Telemachus, as we know, takes ship to seek his father—and this is the big chance for Antinous, the chief suitor. Ambush Telemachus at sea, he decides, and the whole problem will be solved: this is the *Odyssey*'s equivalent of Hamlet's being sent overseas to England by the scheming Claudius.

WHEN WE HAVE noted the similarities of these three tales, we have still to note where they are dissimilar and to ask in what ways their agreements and differences help to a further misunderstanding of *Hamlet*.

It is easy to show that youthful hesitation in the face of murderous revenge is not in the least neurotic; but one of the main difficulties in *Hamlet* is that it tells two such stories rather than one, playing each off against the other. It is not only Hamlet that must avenge a father; Laertes must do so too ("by fraud or force"), and it is this illustrative juxtaposing of sons of different character that makes the play so long. Scenes such as those of Polonius and Laertes, and Polonius and Reynaldo, which Mr. T. S. Eliot has described as "unexplained," seem clearly to be there in order to carry on the Laertes-Polonius side of the story; and one can at least suspect in the crafty Polonius a much-shrunken descendant of the scheming Odysseus —one, that is, who started out (as Polonius does) to be a commanding figure but is reduced by his author as the play continues to a mere figure of fun. Or can we ask if Laertes (the name of Odysseus' father, by the way) and Ophelia are literary descendants of Orestes and Electra—can we ask, in brief, if both *The Choephori* and *The Odyssey* have been harnessed together to help make *Hamlet*?

IN HIS WELL-KNOWN ESSAY of 1919, Mr. Eliot supported J. M. Robertson's suggestions that (1) "*Hamlet* is a stratification, that it represents the efforts of a series of men, each making what he could out of the work of his predecessors," (2) that *Hamlet*, "so far as it is Shakespeare's, is a play dealing with the effect of a mother's guilt upon her son, and that Shakespeare was unable to impose his motive successfully upon the 'intractable' material of the old play." Hamlet, Mr. Eliot continued, is "up against the difficulty that his disgust is occasioned by his mother, but that his mother is not an adequate equivalent for it: his disgust envelops and exceeds her."

May one suggest that the reason for this is that for some incomprehensible cause Gertrude was not made in the likeness of Clytemnestra? If Gertrude must be left to Heaven and may not be murdered, if she has not been Claudius's accomplice and has committed no worse crime than that of marrying her dead husband's brother—why, then, only raging words can be used against her, and the whole point of the Oresteian tragedy—the slaying of a mother by her son—is made impossible. No Freudian inter-

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pretation of Gertrude's relationship to Hamlet can make up for the absent murderess: Hamlet's rage against her is excessive precisely because she fails to be what the play requires her to be. We note in the Oresteia that Orestes' slaying of Aegisthus is an almost perfunctory and "natural" act: it is for the killing of his mother that he is driven mad and desperate by the Furies. In contrast, the killing of Claudius alone seems inadequate to the tragic needs of *Hamlet*, and one notes with sympathy and interest how hard Hamlet (or his author) struggles to make Gertrude the murderess which she is not, and how hard Gertrude struggles to oblige. *"As kill a king, and marry with his brother"* (but she has not killed anyone): *"Oh, Hamlet, thou has cleft my heart in twain!"* (but he has not been allowed to). As for the Ghost, he chooses precisely this latter moment, in the closet scene, to make his second appearance to Hamlet—"to whet thy almost blunted purpose." Does the Ghost mean that by upbraiding his mother instead of killing Claudius, Hamlet is evading his duty? Or is this second visitation something that has stayed in from an earlier version—a version in which a murderous Gertrude *was* killed by Hamlet, with the Ghost arriving to make sure he did so?

IT IS ALL QUITE CLEAR, really. Kyd wrote it first, complete with matricide. They told him to take that out, so he walked out in a rage and put his bloody Gertrude into *Arden of Faversham* instead. Then they gave it to Chapman (who was doing Greek translations) and he piled *Odyssey* on Aeschylus. Finally, they gave it to Shakespeare, saying: "Do anything you like with it, but remember—*no matricide*."

Is this a likely story?

Cargo

Old wounds leave good hollows
Where one who goes can hold
Himself in ghostly embraces
Of former powers and graces
Whose domain no strife mars—
I am made whole by my scars
For whatever now displaces
Follows all that once was
And without loss stows
Me into my own spaces

Samuel Menashe

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ART

The Sectarian Imagination

On John Berger's Criticism — By RICHARD WOLLHEIM

READERS of the *New Statesman* are traditionally divided into two groups: those who read it for "the first half" or the political pages, and those who read it for "the second half" or the book criticism. Recently, however, in the last decade or so, there has emerged a third group of readers, who read it for "the centre bit" (as it used to be) or the section devoted to the Arts and Entertainments. It is not hard to guess what attracts them. It is the column contributed, once regularly, now irregularly, by John Berger; for Berger, whether criticising current exhibitions or commenting upon the visual arts in general, contrives to write in a way that seems far superior to anything else of its kind in the field.

The publication of *Permanent Red** is a good occasion for assessing this apparent superiority. Here we have a great deal of the material that originally gave rise to the judgment, but marshalled into the shape or form of a book. For *Permanent Red*, though it is based upon the criticism that originally appeared in the *New Statesman*, is no mere casual anthology of it; on the contrary, a great deal of special work and calculation has gone into its making. Pieces originally conceived as occasional journalism have been carefully filleted. In some cases the bones, or theoretical argument, have been thrown away, in other cases it is the meat, or descriptive writing, that has been discarded. The rest has been conserved, cut into shape, and then reconstituted so that the whole forms a continuous discussion of many of the problems that surround the visual arts to-day.

The book opens with some rather carefully written essays that relate to the general nature of drawing, painting, and the artist. Then it considers the peculiar difficulty that attaches to being a *modern* artist, and it treats of some artists who have been defeated by the difficulty: these include Gabo, Jackson Pollock, Germaine Richier, and Barbara Hepworth. Then it treats of some artists who have struggled with the difficulty—Henry Moore, Bomberg, Frank Auerbach, Friso ten Holt, etc. Then of those who have struggled with the difficulty and won, the masters of 20th-century art: these are Gris, Lipchitz, Léger, Zadkine, Picasso, Matisse, Dufy, Kokoschka. Next Berger considers the art of the past and the lessons that are to be learnt from it. He touches upon a few of the old masters—Poussin, Watteau, Piero della Francesca—and then turns briefly to salute the future. The book finishes with some "useful definitions," and a moral tale whose moral is (to me at any rate) rather obscure.

PERMANENT RED is a highly readable book, and even a cursory examination of it would be enough to convince one that its author possesses three significant virtues. Since Berger's reputation as an art critic depends upon these three virtues, it is important to know how heavy a weight they can be made to sustain. Do they, for instance, justify the description of him, volunteered by one reviewer of the present book, as "the white hope of British criticism?"

Two of Berger's virtues are positive, the third is negative. In the first place, he writes exceptionally well: the sentences race on with great fluency, without there ever being a trace of slackness or pomposity. The style is colloquial and direct, the epithets are generally sparse, and the metaphors contemporary: all the better to set off the occasional passages where a suppressed romanticism breaks out and issues in descriptions of a more elaborate or evocative kind. This is rare modern prose.

Secondly, Berger possesses a most effective and deadly wit. In reading his recent novel *A Painter of our Time* I found it impossible to credit him with any talent as a writer of dialogue; yet in this book he intersperses his serious discursive argument with scraps of dialogue which have been carefully observed and are deployed to great effect: comments overheard in galleries, the remarks (equally

* *Permanent Red*. By JOHN BERGER. Methuen, 16s.

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vapid) of young art students and middle-aged art-dealers. In themselves they may be trivial or insignificant, but as parts of a larger whole they give verisimilitude to the total composition, which is in effect a devastating study of those who live by and on and off the fringes of advanced art.

Berger's third virtue (and it is this, I think, which, ironically enough, has stood him in best stead) is a negative one: it is that he is not—well, that he is not, let us say, the art critic on the more conservative of our leading Sunday papers. Berger does not belong to the world of *belles lettres* criticism. His writing about art is not based on the principle of evasion. He does not ramble on about the outsides of galleries or about the frames in which the pictures are exhibited; he does not indulge in private jokes; he does not spin elaborate phrases whose meaning is obscure and whose only interest for the reader is whether they will ever (and if so, how) be brought to a conclusion. He does not do everything he can to avoid looking at the pictures; or if he has to look at them, to avoid describing them: and when he does describe them, his interests are not confined to the calculation how nice they would look in *X*'s library or over *Y*'s fireplace. To put it generally: Berger seems not to feel the necessity, the compulsion, to retain his status as an amateur and a gentleman. Like a painter he is prepared to struggle, to grub around, with ideas and appearances.

BERGER HAS then three virtues: two positive, one negative. How do they stand him in an overall estimate of his powers as a critic?

Of the two positive virtues both require some qualification. Berger's literary fluency, admirable and agreeable though it is, can sometimes degenerate into mere phrase-making—a vice which unfortunately seems to be endemic to the tradition of *New Statesman* writing. In Berger this comes out most evidently in a particular kind of "double-barrelled" sentence or period to which he is partial: where the first part of the sentence or period relates in a quite substantive way to the thought that has gone before, while the second part simply relates in a purely verbal way to the first half. The metaphor or image takes on, as it were, a life of its own, and dictates phrases which in themselves lack truth or even on occasions meaning. Consider, for instance, this on post-war art:

> The artist, in other words, has been forced to his knees, and *there tries to find significance in the scraps around him on the floor.*

Or again this on Bratby:

> Once Bratby scrutinised his surroundings—greedily—like a man under arrest being led down a street to the police station. *Now he signs for things and it is the validity of his chits to which he clings.*

The italics in each case are mine, and what I want to know is whether Berger would have been quite happy and confident to say what he says in these italicised passages, if he hadn't first written what comes before. This kind of brightness, which in reality consists in taking one's own metaphors literally, is, I know, much liked by editors, who often call it "brilliance." But I wonder if a serious critic should indulge in it. It is one thing to be bright: quite another to be dazzled by it.

Again, Berger's wit, which is a lively asset, can degenerate into a kind of self-indulgent irritability. It is quite true that the young and the ignorant often say stupid things, but at the risk of seeming priggish I should like to question whether it is the role of an educationalist, no matter whether he is a don or an art critic, to be constantly underlining this. Moreover, it often seems as though Berger's irritability is partial or arbitrary in its action. One social class can get away with things that are forbidden to another. For what really *is* the substantive difference between the "middle-class" philistinism which Berger castigates so mercilessly when he comes across it either in the progressive galleries on the one hand or in the Royal Academy on the other, and "proletarian" philistinism of the kind that Berger seems to admire as the natural and right response to a Léger?

> In front of a Léger one thinks: There it is. Take it or leave it. Or, rather, take it when you want it, and leave it when you don't. Scribble moustaches on his girls if you like. Buy a postcard of it and send it home along with a vulgar one. Lean against it, and prompted by the bicycle in it, discuss where you're going next Sunday. Let the dumb-bells in another remind you that you've stopped doing your early morning exercises. . . .

I know that it is fashionable to regard this kind of reaction to art as "healthy," but what I want to know is why Berger regards it as an æsthetic advance on the attitude of "the intrigued Managerial wife at the Royal Academy" who had been mocked, eighty pages back, for saying in front of a conventional portrait, "Just look at that beautiful material!"

AND THIS, OF COURSE, brings us back to Berger's third virtue, for to say that Berger is not a frivolous critic suggests that he is a serious one: to say that he doesn't despise ideas nor evade description of the works of art that he is criticising seems to imply that he has a theory of his own about art, and what it does, and what it

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should look like. Has he? And if he has, what is it?

Most reviewers of *Permanent Red* have assumed that the theoretical groundwork of the book is provided by Marxism. In support of this view one could certainly cite various declarations made by Berger in the course of the book that he is a Marxist critic. But this is not conclusive evidence—unless one subscribes, as I certainly don't, to a kind of McCarthyite principle that no one would declare himself a Marxist unless he were one. If, however, one doesn't have to take Berger's self-assessment as incorrigible, then I think that there is a certain amount of evidence, some negative, some positive, which challenges it.

First, the negative evidence. An essential element, I should have thought, in any Marxist criticism is that it always endeavours to relate the work of art under investigation to its historical circumstances, to reveal it as an expression of the "consciousness" of its time, and at the same time to show how this consciousness is itself the product of a certain moment or phase in the history of the class-struggle. Yet this sort of approach is all but totally missing from *Permanent Red*. There are a few reverential nods in the direction of the historical approach, but these are both perfunctory and casual. The necessary effort has not even been made to preserve consistency: we are told on p. 199 that "Renoir was the last great bourgeois artist," though we had already learnt on p. 135 that Matisse (who is described as a "genius") in his imagination and taste "belonged to the world of the French *haute bourgeoisie*."

But of course the positive evidence is more significant. In so far as we can extract from *Permanent Red* a theory of creativity and criticism, it does not seem to me to be specifically Marxist. This I shall try to bring out by reconstructing what I take this theory to be, as best I can. And I say "as best I can" advisedly, for two careful readings of *Permanent Red* leave me in some serious doubt about what Berger's æsthetic standpoint really is.

LET US BEGIN at the simplest point of entry, which happens to coincide with Berger's own: his theory of criticism. The subject is important in itself, because it is generally held —and held, I gather, by Berger amongst others— that such serious merits as he has as an art-critic are intimately connected with the fact that he happens to possess a more articulated, a more thought-out theory of criticism than any of his colleagues have equipped themselves with. In the Preface to *Permanent Red* he expresses the hope that the reader will put his book down "with a clearer idea of what criticism can mean."

There are, Berger maintains, two dangers that confront the modern critic. The first consists in an excessive identification with the artist and hence a total acceptance of his artistic intentions: on this view, the critical problem becomes simply that of determining whether these intentions have been adequately realised in the work under examination, and the question is never raised whether they were worth entertaining in the first place. The other error consists in taking an excessively historical view: the critic identifies himself not with the artist but with God, and if he does this he is liable to dismiss the whole of what is presented for his inspection as "decadent" or "escapist." In a sense he won't be wrong, modern culture *is* these things: but since modern culture also contains within itself the seeds of the culture of the future, it also contains elements which are neither decadent nor escapist, and the duty of the modern critic is to be sensitive to them. The first error is connected with taking the "very limited" view, and the second with taking the long-term view, and since the two views cannot be purged of error by the obvious policy of supplementing each with what is true in the other—for they are "mutually opposed"—the only thing to do, according to Berger, is to drop both approaches and start elsewhere.

"Proper criticism" judges a work of art not by the purely "subjective" criterion of its correspondence to the artist's intentions, nor by the excessively "objective" criterion of the place that the work is ultimately to occupy in the historical process, but by a criterion which is at once immediate and functional. The supreme question that the critic should ask of the work of art is: "Does this work help or encourage men to know and claim their social rights?"

But no sooner has Berger enunciated this principle than he immediately guards himself against possible "misinterpretations"—which seem to me to coincide with all the obvious interpretations. It is not Berger's demand that art should be political, or that it should be polemical, or even that it should necessarily be committed: these are not the qualities in terms of which art is to be evaluated. The criterion by which a work of art is to be judged is that it should "increase our awareness of our own potentiality," or, more simply, that it should give us *hope*. But what, we might ask, is the connection between giving men hope and encouraging them to know and claim their social rights? To this Berger's answer is rather surprising. Since in our age the basic problem for men is that of claiming their social rights, then it follows that if they are given hope, it must be that they are given hope to do just this. Now it will be observed that in this answer any refer-

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ence to what was the most important element in the original claim—namely, that through art men are brought to *knowledge* of their social rights—has quite dropped out. But, even apart from this omission, the answer comes as something of a disappointment or an anti-climax; and this for two reasons.

IN THE FIRST PLACE, the weight that Berger's theory of criticism appeared to place upon the *political* efficacy of good art turns out to be illusory. For it now emerges that, in so far as the work of art has a distinctly political effect, this is to be attributed not to the character or nature of the work in itself but to the "mental set" or attitude of the spectator. The work of art fires him: but that it fires him in a *political* direction depends solely upon the way he was initially facing. My point might be put like this: To say that the test of good art is whether it encourages men to claim their political rights is rather like saying that the test of good pornography is whether it raises the birth rate. In each case the test presupposes a certain disposition or tendency on the part of the audience. Accordingly it would be quite misleading to attribute behaviour that flows from this disposition or tendency directly to the work in question, or to suggest that a true test of its quality is whether or not it has the power to produce such behaviour.

Berger's failure to see this point clearly emerges when he comes to discuss what is really a quite tangential question: about the limits of æsthetic understanding. Can we ever justly assess the art of our own day, or must we leave this to future generations? Or is it, alternatively, only the art of our own day that we can hope to understand, and must the art of the past always be shrouded in some kind of incomprehension? On this point Berger appears to shift his position most uneasily. On p. 151, for instance, he writes: "An appreciation of the art of the past is one-sided and to some extent distorted." But on p. 15 he had tried to assure the young critic that if he struggles with contemporary art as best he can, "you will be helping to bring about the future from which people will be able to judge the art of your own time with ease." And in the same vein he writes on p. 146 that while a painter is alive, all his works

> are seen to some extent as works in progress.... After his death they become final and definitive: they no longer chart his progress, they gather together to form his destination.... Only when an artist is dead can he be fully recognised as a master.

However, despite the apparent inconsistency between these passages, I think that they can be reconciled by seeing that Berger is operating at different times with quite different notions of the true nature of a work of art and hence of what it is to see the work of art as it really is. For sometimes—as in the first quotation—he includes in the nature of the work of art the reaction that it provokes in the contemporary spectator, or what he calls its "plea." Now, since the spectator's attitude is a historical and transient phenomenon and therefore the work of art will not produce the same reaction in the future as it does now, it follows that its appreciation in the future will be "distorted." On other occasions, however—and the second two quotations exemplify this—Berger seems to identify the nature of a work of art solely with its power to heighten our sense of potentiality and he excludes from its nature the power to produce the response appropriate to its age. When he conceives the work in this way, it is only natural that he should think that it requires the passage of time before it can be justly appreciated.

THE SECOND REASON why Berger's account of the connection between good art and the capacity to arouse men to claim their social rights is disappointing is that it divorces his theory of criticism from any theory of art. At first sight it looked as though Berger in making this capacity the criterion of serious art was indirectly advocating or arguing for a particular kind of art. But when it emerges that all that Berger's theory requires of a work of art *directly* is that it should encourage hope, we see that nothing follows about the proper character of art; and we see this even more clearly when we come to examine how, according to Berger, art can encourage hope. It can do so in one or other of two ways. Either, as in "classical" art (Piero, Poussin, Degas) by showing how the world can be tamed and controlled and so promising man the mastery of reality, or else, as in "romantic" art (El Greco, Watteau, van Gogh) by creating an imaginary world and so inspiring in men the desire for change. But if this is how, according to Berger, art encourages hope, then there is no reason why *any* form or style of art should fail to satisfy his criterion: even abstraction might be subsumed under the category of classical art in his extended sense.

I don't want to be misunderstood. I am not criticising Berger for not having a theory of art. For in the first place I am far from certain how desirable a thing it is to have one: and anyhow he clearly has one. My point merely is that from his theory of criticism no theory of art follows: whereas at first sight it looked as though one did. Accordingly his theory of art

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requires a quite independent basis. If we want to discover what it is and how it is justified, we must not look for any guidance from his doctrine that art encourages men to know and claim their social rights.

BERGER, then, has a theory of art. He employs it in praising the artists he admires, and, even more, in criticising those he disapproves of. The theory he expresses by saying that all serious art consists in "the search for reality:" æsthetic aberration occurs when this search is abandoned.

But there will be many who feel that at this moment in history it is too late to state the theory of realism in such simple and unsophisticated terms. We need to know, for instance, what in this context is meant by talking of "reality;" and, again, we need to be given a very good reason why the search for reality, or realism, should be the sole concern of the visual arts. (For a simple point, often overlooked, is that we do not have to deny realism altogether to resist its exclusive claim over the arts.) To neither of these two questions does Berger, it seems to me, give a very satisfactory answer.

On the *meaning* of realism he is all but silent. I think that this is a disadvantage, though not perhaps a very serious objection. What is serious though, is that on one of the very few occasions when he tries to explicate the idea, he does so in terms of "tactile values." Now despite the prestige that this expression still, unaccountably, enjoys, it can have no legitimate place in Berger's scheme of thought, for in so far as it is used meaningfully it relates specifically to a theory of vision which Berger rejects. It relates to the old Berkeleyan theory according to which all we *really* see are those properties of things which could be reproduced on a flat screen: their spatial properties are not directly visible but are apprehended solely through the sense of touch. However, as the result of experience, the visible properties of things acquire the power of summoning up in the spectator the tactile sensations he would have if he stretched out his hand and touched them. It is the capacity to incorporate into a picture or representation these associative powers that, in the language of the theory, is described as endowing it with "tactile values." But Berger cannot rightly accept any of this. For not merely is the whole Berkeleyan theory anathema for philosophical reasons to any Marxist, but Berger himself, as chance would have it, elsewhere in the book (p. 95) denounces it as without "validity or usefulness." In fact Berger is right. But to reject a theory and to preserve that part of its terminology which enjoys a certain prestige amongst the uncomprehending, is surely unworthy of a serious critic.

ABOUT THE JUSTIFICATION OF REALISM Berger says more, but what he says is not very satisfactory. On the most important single argument that is used nowadays to support the claims of realism—namely that if realism is abandoned, then all those other aspects of painting in favour of which realism is abandoned, most notably expression, must also be abandoned—Berger is not wholly consistent. For if one accepts this argument one is committed to a certain view about the relation between expression and representation. And that is that expression, so far from being an alternative to representation, is in fact dependent upon it, for we express ideas or feelings by representing objects in this way rather than that; so that where there is no representational problem, nothing that we set down on the canvas can possibly have any expressive force.

Now it seems at one point as though this is Berger's own view: when, for instance, he writes: "The great current illusion of non-art lies in the belief that numerous meanings can be expressed without searching" (p. 103). But in his essay on Jackson Pollock, Berger seems to go back on this. He compares Pollock's art to that of "a man brought up from birth in a white cell so that he has never seen anything except the growth of his own body" (p. 68). Such a man, Berger says, would want to express "his ideas and feelings about growth, time, energy, death:" but would lack any "vocabulary of seen or remembered visual images with which to do so." In consequence his paintings would be "like pictures painted on the inside walls of his mind;" they would resemble "the tragic spectacle of a deaf mute trying to talk;" they would be meaningless to us.

In this passage Berger seems to be putting forward a new argument: namely, that the man would succeed in expressing himself, though we would not understand what he was trying to express. But this is different from the original thesis according to which in the absence of a public symbolism or language the man could not express himself at all: he might accompany his brush strokes with certain ideas or feelings, but these ideas or feelings could not get into or inform his strokes unless the strokes were made within known existing conventions. Furthermore, this new thesis that Berger appears to be putting forward is of diminished significance. For it is one thing to say of a work of art that it is strictly unintelligible in that there is nothing there to understand: and another and a lesser thing to say of it that, though it could be understood since it has meaning, no one in

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fact is able to understand it. For this latter is likely to be something explicable in terms of, and therefore eliminable by the manipulation of, cultural, historical, educational factors. A question I should like to ask Berger is: How much of Cubism, which he rightly regards as the great revolutionary style of our century, was in his opinion understood at the time?

Quite apart from this general argument, on which, as I say, Berger is appreciably ambiguous, he tries at one point to gain some prestige for realism by pointing out that it was the universal style of all art up to 1500 and therefore that in which much of the art we treasure most was composed. But, of course, this argument carries no weight unless we can believe that realism was not just the style but the *chosen* or *preferred* style of Renaissance and pre-Renaissance art. At one moment Berger, it seems, would have us believe this: he writes of "the limitations within which some of the greatest painters of our culture *were content to remain*" (p. 154, my italics). It doesn't really require the massive argumentation of Professor E. H. Gombrich's *Art and Illusion* to make us aware that this is a thoroughly anachronistic way of looking at the problem.

BERGER, however, has a stronger argument than any I have so far suggested for his subscription to realism; but the argument, it is important to see, does not derive from a theory of art. Indeed, strictly speaking, it has nothing to do with art at all. It relates to a quite different problem, which—the evidence suggests—is really of greater concern to Berger than the problem of Art itself: the problem of the relation between the Artist and Society. How to secure a *rapport*, an understanding between, say, the painter or the sculptor, on the one hand, and, on the other, those who belong to his community and are the potential spectators of his work—that is the issue that appears to engross Berger. And his solution is that such an understanding can be brought about only if art acquires for its content something shared between the artist and his audience. At one point, it is true, *à propos* of Picasso, Berger suggests that this demand for a "shared content" applies only to a "dramatic artist," but it would appear to be his more considered opinion that the demand holds universally across the whole range of at least the visual arts. Furthermore, this demand is satisfied uniquely by Realism.

When I say that this argument doesn't really relate to the problem of Art, what I mean is that Berger nowhere suggests that as Art gains a broader social base, so its quality will improve. He talks of the present decadence of Art, in a world where the artist is "alienated" from his public, but it is far from clear that this is an *æsthetic* decadence. And if Berger were to retort at this stage that he doesn't talk of purely æsthetic decadence, because it is already decadent to separate the "æsthetic" aspect of art from its other, including its social, aspects, then surely he would be wrong. It may be that an art that is obscure or private is also of poor quality; but it does not follow that we cannot distinguish between its æsthetic and its social failings. Indeed it would seem to follow that we can.

That Berger's standpoint is ultimately not an æsthetic one, that his subscription to realism and his rejection of "advanced" art do not really relate to the quality of the work in question, emerges fairly clearly in the piece called "Beyond Bond Street," which is an imaginary account of a local Art Exhibition in a small provincial town. The pictures by and large are uninspiring, but the show as a whole meets with Berger's approval. Why? Why, he asks,

> do I condemn the *Biennale* and champion the local art show? In the name of Folk Art? In the name of Popular Art? No, for neither exists. The works in the Town Hall are in idiom as metropolitan as those in the Royal Academy, and in personality they are predominantly middle-class. I champion it for the sake of what I tried to imply at the beginning of this article—its human context. The works there, despite both their faults and their virtues, will form a nucleus for associations, reminiscences, arguments, stories, history, to nearly all those who climb the stairs to see them. Mr. Griffiths did not believe he was hanging masterpieces. He was content simply to be hanging his own district's art show. Until we have achieved that spirit—not in terms of so many small towns—but in terms of an entire people, art will generally remain a luxury. And we shall not achieve it by "education," by discovering Primitives or by lectures on art appreciation. We shall only achieve it by a revolutionary change in our whole society.

Here is the true voice of Berger speaking out against the modern conditions of artistic production: and the accents in which he speaks are not those of theoretical Marxism. They are the accents of old-fashioned populism.

I FEEL (I hope) no less strongly than Berger does about the modern conditions of artistic production—although perhaps we might not be in agreement on the diagnosis. For to me the most frightening feature of our times is the way in which the "conspicuous consumers" of art, those who buy for reasons of prestige or status, buy in accordance with a taste that is as advanced as any art they could buy: and this is because, before they buy art, they buy taste.

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The consequence is that instead of advanced artists enjoying some kind of seclusion or isolation, they are to be found at the centre of the market-place. The art which is necessarily least understood is that which is most highly prized. And this, it seems to me, is bound to have disastrous consequences for the comprehension and appreciation of art throughout society.

But though I am at one with Berger in condemnation of the present situation, I do not find his suggestion for remedying it at all convincing. I am unconvinced because it seems to me that Berger in laying down the conditions for a "healthy" art totally divorces the discussion from what must be its proper background: the question of the nature of creativity. For how can we hope to specify the right relation of art to society unless we have some idea of the relation of art to the artist? Yet on this subject Berger is naïve to silent.

What he fails to see is the inherent tension, intrinsic at any rate to all the visual arts, between privacy and publicity, between expression and communication, the nature of which is caught and registered in the notion of *sublimation*. For to say that art is sublimation is to say that it is, on the one hand, an expression of private feelings or emotions, and, on the other hand, an expression of these forces in a socially acceptable form. This means that the whole truth lies neither in the view that the artist can just do what he wants provided that he remains true to himself, nor in the view that the public has the right to demand of the artist what it wants. Art is the result of a bargain: the artist trying to get the public to accept the way he expresses himself, the public trying to get the artist to express himself in a way it finds acceptable. Sometimes the artist will strike a bargain with the whole of society; on other occasions, he will find its terms unacceptable, and reluctantly or perhaps even defiantly he will prefer to negotiate for better terms with a smaller audience.

On Berger, however, the whole urgency of the problem appears to be lost. And this means that not only is he unsympathetic to obscurity but he is also, ultimately, unappreciative of lucidity. Witness his discussion of van Gogh and the van Gogh myth as we find it in a film like *"Lust for Life."* Berger rightly attacks the film for presenting van Gogh in an essentially pathological fashion, as though he were just another psychotic. But surely what is wrong about such a presentation is that it leaves out of account what is unique to van Gogh: the way in which he dealt with his psychosis. This, however, is not Berger's point. He writes: "It is of course true that van Gogh was subject to violent attacks of something approaching insanity, but his greatness and his heroic achievement were the result of making this *incidental* to his life work" (p. 35). Now, read casually, Berger's words might suggest something rather like Freud's dictum to the effect that the artist is distinguished from the neurotic as the man who is able to find his way back from fantasy to reality. But I don't think that in fact Berger means anything so enlightened. I think he means that through hard work van Gogh managed to snap out of himself and get down to serious achievement.

Berger criticises *"Lust for Life"* for separating what van Gogh *was* from what he *did*. It seems to me that Berger makes the contrary error, of separating what he *did* from what he *was*—and so by extension of separating the artist's work from his temperament and psyche. Once he has done this he can with a clear conscience make heavy demands upon the former without ever troubling to take the latter into account.

IT IS, THEN, ULTIMATELY the artist who comes least well out of *Permanent Red*. Any artist who adopts anything other than a pedestrian or banausic attitude towards his calling is criticised as a potential betrayer of his society. Above all, any return, any concession, to the old Romantic idea of the artist as the inspired vehicle of forces larger than himself, an idea at least as old as the Greeks, is ruthlessly castigated. Klee, for instance, who described himself as "the implement of a distant sphere," is for just this reason relegated to the status of someone who "can barely be considered an artist at all."

It is hard—harder indeed than anything I can manage—totally to expel the thought that Berger in all this is animated by a certain envy of creativity, of the free and benign exercise of the imagination. This envy he tries to allay by postulating a new kind of society in which the artist will not merely have his place, he will know it. Well fed, well housed, well esteemed, freed alike from the miseries and the splendours of bohemian life, he will work for the greater glory of his society. The function of this image, of this vision of the pure society, where doubtless jeans and pony-tails will be forbidden, is only too evident. For not only is it in its coarse and powerful way a work of the imagination, but by means of it, Berger manages to revenge himself, if only in phantasy, upon the more creative imagination of true artists.

In this vision, which in my opinion lies behind all Berger's more speculative criticism, we see the sectarian imagination at work. But nowhere anything to which I would wish to apply that noble word "Socialism."

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MUSIC

Jazz & Narcotics

By Kenneth Allsop

"DON'T get on the H. If you do, reach for a ·45 instead of a bindle. Blow your brains out—it's the best way out," said Mary Ann McCall, a singer who had been with the Woody Herman, Benny Goodman, and Artie Shaw bands, who had been voted No. 1 American girl vocalist in the 1950 *Metronome*, *Down Beat*, and *Esquire* polls, and who, broke and forgotten, had just pleaded guilty in San Francisco to being in possession of heroin.

That was seven years ago. Since then a melancholy large number of jazz musicians, unheeding of the warnings and public renunciations of Miss McCall and other repentant users, have got on the H. During the post-war period deaths resulting directly from narcotics addiction, or indirectly from diseases induced by addiction debilitation, have included such original creative talents as Wardell Gray, Charlie Parker, Fats Navarro, and Billie Holiday. Between 1953 and 1955—a time when the heat was on and jazzmen were being sorted out and vindictively chivvied by police and Federal agents—Anita O'Day, Gerry Mulligan, Stan Getz, Art Pepper, and Tadd Dameron were some of the "big names" sent to prison, thereby providing the Federal Narcotics Bureau with headline evidence of its efficiency, perhaps to justify having made 10,373 arrests in one year in one state alone to get 2,291 narcotics offenders convicted. Among additional prominent band-leaders and sidesmen arrested on drugs charges were Chet Baker, Phil Urso, Percy Heath, and Milt Jackson.

Almost all these, it will be noted, are modernists. It has been said, with reasonable accuracy, that early New Orleans style was played on whisky, the swing of the 'thirties on marijuana, and bop and the later cool music of the 'forties and 'fifties on heroin. Neither liquor, even when alcoholism was involved, nor a penchant for reefers aroused much disapprobation among the public, who seemed willing to accept a degree of loucheness with their jazz. Bix Beiderbecke was a lush, and that may be part of the Scott Fitzgerald period redolence of his early death from gin and pneumonia in 1931 at twenty-eight, and Gene Krupa's conviction for marijuana smoking in the 'thirties probably increased his glamour in the eyes of the bobby-soxer swing-fans of that time. But toleration stopped short at the increase in the altogether more nauseating business of jabbing needles into ulcerated veins for admission to a new spectral fellowship of zombies. The hostile reaction to the cycle of prosecutions, publicity, proliferating emulative addiction and more prosecutions has created within jazz-circles a resentful sensitivity that jazz and dope have come to have for the layman the same correlation as bacon and eggs. The cruder paperback and tabloid sensationalism depicting all jazz clubs as *conversaziones* for junkies, and every jazz musician as a *Man with the Golden Arm* hop-head, has stimulated a counterblast of indignant, self-righteous, and white-washing trade journalism. The denials and protests are, however, as glib a misrepresentation as the vice-den exaggerations.

The fact is that the United States has the worst narcotics incidence in the Western world, and, although numerically the medical profession may provide the biggest occupational category of addicts, the entertainment industry and its sub-group of jazz musicians comes proportionately first. "Let's not be hypocrites about this," said Buddy De Franco, the clarinettist, when the mortalities and arrests were thinning the jazz ranks most alarmingly, "there is a disgraceful number of addicts inside and out of the music business." It was the mounting gravity of the damage being done to what most musicians regard as a cause as well as a living that gradually forced open admission that jazz had a desperate narcotics problem. Confessions in newspapers and magazines and discussions of the situation in television interviews and in lecture halls led to attempts at preventive action other than the beat-'em-up-and-lock-'em-up official attitude, summed up by the Commissioner of Narcotics, Harry J. Anslinger, last

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year when he described the drug addict as "an immoral vicious social leper."

AT THE 1957 Newport Jazz Festival a panel composed of a lawyer, a psychologist, two critics, a priest, and two musicians, opened a forum on the subject *Music and the Use of Habituating and Addicting Drugs*. This drove a hole through the curtain of silence that the profession had tried to keep drawn around the subject. One of the panel, Billy Taylor, the pianist, said: "It's a terrible thing to see a talent stifled by narcotics—it's a frightening thing to watch. But the addict isn't usually the successful musician—he's more likely a young player trying to make the top or an old guy who feels that time has passed him by." The outcome of the forum was an offer by the Newport Festival Board to give financial support to a permanent narcotics committee and to sponsor the establishment of a free clinic, with psychiatric help, for addicted musicians.

The clinic has been operating for the past three years, and now the psychologist who participated in the panel, Charles Winick, has published a paper on the results of a study he conducted in New York City by interviewing 357 musicians—69 per cent white and 31 per cent Negro, ages 18–54—on their own habits and those of about 2,000 colleagues. It is an important preliminary sortie into an area that has hitherto received scant organised, scientific investigation, for it provides the first reliable statistical information about the relationship between jazz and narcotics. Although this is limited to New York, the inference may be fairly drawn that a similar situation must obtain in San Francisco, Chicago, and other American cities where jazz is played in similar urban social conditions.

The first clear finding is that the jazz-narcotics syndrome is no lurid invention by feature-writers and jazz-haters. Of the 2,000 musicians investigated, 82 per cent had tried marijuana at least once, 54 per cent were occasional smokers and 23 per cent habituals. Heroin had fewer adherents, but is obviously a much more firmly rooted custom than apologists have ever conceded, or perhaps realised: 53 per cent had tried it, 24 per cent were occasional users, and 16 per cent shot it regularly. There are about 5,000 jazz musicians in New York. If that sample is to be accepted as accurate, it means that 800 of them were at that time heroin addicts.

WHY DO SO MANY jazz musicians dope? Thirty-one per cent believed it gave their performance a charge—that, with its help, they achieved "contact high"—a "special kind of emotional group contagion," as Winick describes it. Two per cent believed that while "turned on" with marijuana, perception of time and space is so altered by the retarding of the beat that, in individual cases, playing might be better. Over a third of the respondents said that, anyway, most jazz musicians *think* they play better while on "pot" (marijuana) even if they are actually playing worse, because they feel that "nothing's in the way." There was generally a tolerant attitude towards pot, but about heroin—"the hard stuff"—there was much more caution and concern. Fifty-one per cent said it decreased the quality of performance; nine per cent thought it might increase quality. One user said: "Heroin makes me feel better, but has little effect on my playing. I do feel I can execute things a little more freely than when I'm off. Some days I'd love to be back in bed instead of playing, and on these days heroin helps me to play at all."

One of the most important factors is what Winick calls "the drug climate of the band itself." He cites one renowned band in which all the members but one smoked marijuana regularly: the exception was called an addict by his colleagues because he took Miltown. "In this band marijuana use was thus the norm," remarks Winick. "The social acceptability of a marijuana smoker in a band which had no other users of the drug would be quite different."

What enters here is the "narcotic ideology." Respondents explained that young musicians take drugs because they identify with a famous addict musician—"a few of the undisputed geniuses of modern jazz were widely known as heroin addicts, and there is reason to believe that some younger musicians may have begun using the drug on the basis of some kind of magical identification with their heroes." The assumption is that they will blow as brilliantly as their idol if they go on the needle.

THERE may, however, already be an internal change in process. Max Jones, the British jazz critic, is of the opinion after talks with many visiting American musicians, that a new ideology is burgeoning among young jazzmen—a clean-and-wholesome, almost knightly concept of conduct, which sternly eschews not only the narcotics mess of the recent past, but the whole mode of feckless, fast living, and has even thrown out hard liquor. They live chastely and play golf; they play their *conservatoire*-influenced music with dedicated sobriety. Some older jazzmen look askance at these young crusaders who are known generally as "Boy Scouts," and there are those who feel that if jazz is sterilised too stringently it will be diluted

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into tea-salon tinklings and exchange for respectability the lustiness that is its life-force.

In any case, despite the New Asceticism, the conditions in which jazz is played remain the same as before: insecurity of employment, disrupted hours, and the emotional rigours of the performance, working conditions which Winick found to be a common factor among his respondents. Narcotics provide a physical lift during trans-country all-day bus-trips with performances at the end. One heroin user described how he began shooting in 1952 while travelling on the road. "We were so tired and beat that we didn't even have time to brush our teeth when we arrived in a town. I found I could pep myself up more quickly with heroin than with liquor. If you drank feeling that tired you'd fall on your face." Sixteen per cent of the respondents attributed narcotics use to being keyed-up after a six-hour stint until the early hours and finding it a way of unwinding.

There was also, Winick discovered, "a positive social pressure" on jazzmen to use drugs and four per cent of addicts had militantly tried to convert non-users, with four times as much proselytising activity on behalf of marijuana as on behalf of heroin. Very few respondents (three per cent) expressed any moral disapproval of others' use of narcotics—the majority (67 per cent) of non-users felt sorry for those hooked, but shrugged: "It's their business if they want to."

A SURPRISING FACT that emerged—and one in conflict with the generalised theory that once a heroin main-liner always a main-liner until the early inevitable death—is that heroin use was concentrated in the 25–39 age group, after which it tapered off to very little. Only two musicians over 40 were referred to as heroin-addicts. Five respondents over 40, who had been regular heroin users, had kicked in their late 'thirties—usually without knowing the reason. One 43-year-old jazzman said: "There were just longer and longer periods between the times when I took a shot. I guess you could say I diminuendoed out of it." Winick's theory is that musicians who start on heroin in their late 'teens "as a response to the problems of early adulthood, mature out of addiction . . . possibly because the stresses and strains of life are becoming stabilised for them and because the major challenges of adulthood have passed." As nine-tenths of New York's musicians are unemployed at any given time, the competitiveness which a young unknown jazzman has to face is appreciable.

Winick comments on the in-group hipster jargon which the respondents used (*hip* and *hipster* themselves derive from opium smoking for which the addict reclines on one hip) and which is to jazzmen "a special language of fantasy and alienation." He continues:

> Jazz has up to quite recently been an outsider's music and its taking over so much narcotic slang has doubtless been a reflection of the marginal role of the musician. The language has been shared by a variety of those deviant groups which constitute the grey sub-culture with which jazz music has for so long been associated . . . the use of this hip talk by jazz artists was a factor in helping to create an environment in which it was relatively easy to regard drug use as an accepted kind of behaviour.

Narcotics reinforce the feeling of estrangement from society possessed by so many musicians, and the traditional role of jazz as a protest music was intensified in the post-war period when bop became almost a coterie music, technically difficult both to play and to listen to. This is when heroin became particularly hip—it gave the user the withdrawn, detached, and cool poise that expressed much of the mood of the period.

Winick concludes his enquiry at that point, with the observation that narcotics may now be becoming less of a social problem among jazzmen with the slanting away from cool music towards a more funky, or earthy, kind of expression, and the acceptance—almost seizure—of jazz by respectable American citizenry as a "folkways heritage," appropriate now for campus courses, concert hall recitals, State Department-sponsored culture tours and serious histories.

WHAT, of course, he does not venture upon, for it is not within the scope of his enquiry, but which may be worth speculating upon here, is the larger social context of narcotics use in America. Jazz and marijuana have always had a warm relationship, and dozens of titles reflect the ironic enjoyment of musicians at fooling the public by playing thinly-veiled numbers about dope—*Muggles, Chant of the Weed, You's a Viper, Jerry the Junker*—and, at a more submerged, city ghetto level, Negro blues men like Champion Jack Dupree have sung bluntly about the habit, as in *Junker's Blues* ("I'm sick as I can be") and *Can't Kick the Habit* ("It don't pay nobody to live their life so fast—this dope is killin' me"). It goes back further. *Willie the Weeper*, one of the most widely-known American folk-ballads with thirty local versions, treats humorously on the gaudy dreams of an opium-smoking chimney sweep. In 1900 one out of every 400 Americans was an addict. The prosaic, almost work-a-day status of dope in the United States is indicated by a catalogue circulated by Sears, Roebuck in the 1890s, in which, among the advertisements

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for such homely articles as farm boots, pyjamas, and stereoscopes, was a remedy for "the morphine and opium habit." America's geographical vulnerability to dope—its southern land border wide open to smuggling from Mexico, where hemp and poppies grow lushly—is understandable. The stubbornly rigid legal process, by attempting unenforceable prohibition, creates a built-in profit to narcotics dealing, an illegal business with an estimated annual turnover of 250 million dollars.

Yet neither of these factors in conjunction explains the special susceptibility to narcotics. Britain has 359 cases of known drug addiction and addicts are legally supplied with maintaining doses on the National Health Service. America, with only four times the population, has officially between 43,000 and 60,000 addicts, but many doctors working on the problem outside the jurisdiction of the Treasury Department's Bureau of Narcotics believe that 300,000 is the more realistic figure, all of whom, under the law as it operates, become statutory criminals when they begin getting the stuff—always at high prices from underworld peddlers. The bulk of addiction is an issue of poverty, slum-living, and racial discrimination: New York has 25,000 addicts, most of them in Manhattan's Harlem and East Harlem, the Negro and Puerto Rican tenement zones, a big proportion here being among teen-agers—one eight-year-old boy was recently found to be a heroin-sniffer, and there are estimated to be 10,000 addicts under 16 in New York.

But there has been another more curious development, partly linked to jazz but with divergent meanings: the use of drugs as a passport to a new sub-culture. "Everybody's a head now," said an 18-year-old Hollywood girl who bragged that she had been blasting since she was 13. "One out of every five persons you meet on the street are heads.... Why don't people leave us alone?" For perhaps the same reason that the young bop musicians of the 'forties copied their idols both in their use of narcotics and in their back-turning contempt for the square lay public who did not dig their music, narcotics have become part of the mythology of the anti-Organisation Man rogue-artist, the rebel hero of the American 'sixties.

Narcotics seem as integral a part of beat-life as Zen, Bird, and Anarchy.

> *E.g.*, Allen Ginsberg in *Howl*: "I saw the best minds of my generation ... dragging themselves through the Negro streets at dawn looking for an angry fix." Clellon Holmes in *Go*: *"Everything's* great on tea [marijuana]. Hell, when I was on benny I got all mean, I was getting deep psychopathic kicks all the time. But with tea, you're just high, you're just digging everything." Jack Kerouac in *The Subterraneans*: "She'd sit with them, they'd go on the nod, in the dead silence she'd wait, sensing the slow snakelike waves of vibration struggling across the room, the eyelids falling, the heads nodding and jerking up again."

And, of course, the daddy-o and warlock of the beats, William S. Burroughs, whose *Naked Lunch*—the Dead Sea Scrolls of his expatriate disciples from Tangier to Venice West, all of whom seem to have fragments—is a kind of junkie's *Hound of Heaven*, a phantasmagoria of flight from or pursuit of every kind of narcotics experience. As "William Lee" in *My First Days on Junk* (prior to *Naked Lunch*) Burroughs wrote about the pleasures of morphine:

> "... a spreading wave of relaxation slackening the muscles away from the bones so that you seem to float without outlines like lying in warm salt water."

Dr. Granville W. Larimore, a New York narcotics specialist, asked why Britain had no problem comparable to America's, said: "I guess it's something in the British cultural environment." But, surely, the reverse is true. There is in America a fascination with both the illusion of salvation and the allure of destruction that narcotics simultaneously offer. Illegal traffic in drugs has trebled since the war ended and is blamed for 50 per cent of big city crime; narcotics, in crime, law processes, and medical care, cost the nation two billion dollars a year. That's the illegal side; legally, America spends 75 million dollars a year on the Miltown-type of meprobamate tranquillisers, the don't-give-a-damn pills, with another huge bill for benzedrines to supply energy-spurts at required moments, while both results can be accomplished in a kind of group therapy by means of Miltown swished in gin, known as a Miltini.

JAZZ, PERHAPS, must accept some guilt for helping to popularise narcotics, while at the same time it was being victimised by them; but the musicians are part of the culture that has produced both jazz and the need for escape on the point of a needle. *The Connection*, the American play about drug-addicts written by Jack Gelber, who owns to trying everything from heroin to peyote, has a cast of junkies waiting in their pad, as if for Godot, for the "connection" who will bring them their next supply of H, and beyond which their hopes and imagination do not extend. One of them gestures through his stupor towards the audience. "Man," he says, "there are people who worry, aspirin addicts, chlorophyll addicts, who are hooked worse than me."

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NOTES & TOPICS

Critic Within the Act

IN THE recent discussions aroused by the concept of Action Painting, one criticism has been most insistent as well as most substantial: that the notion of Action Painting holds up "history" as the supreme value to the neglect of the æsthetic. A movement in art, it is objected, is presented as something that has "happened"—we show how Action Painting came into being and explain that it was born legitimately ("logically?") out of the situation of art, but nowhere do we indicate why any Action painting is valid *as a painting* nor how to tell a good one from a bad one. Are all Action paintings perfect? Or is a suspension of judgment demanded, in order that the spectator may fly into ecstasies over a *kind of art* simply because it is new? (In that case, we are reminded, sometimes not without a hint of malice, that Action Painting is not so new any more.)

The complaint of æsthetics against basing art criticism on the nature of a creative occurrence was brilliantly epitomised by a remark of Mary McCarthy in *Partisan Review*. "You cannot," she admonished, "hang an event on the wall, only a picture." The Action Painter, her argument ran, may not intend to produce an art object but to "abolish art" in favour of a meaningful gesture. Painting, however, is in the realm of things made, not of deeds done; and art wins against the painter by changing his "act" back into a picture. Hence, once a painting is finished, criticism ought to examine it in the light of the tradition of pictures and tell us whether it is good or bad.

Our reply is: in dealing with *new* things there is a question that precedes that of good or bad. We refer to the question, "What is it?"—the question of identity. To answer this question in such a way as to distinguish between the really novel and the falsely novel *is itself an evaluation*, perhaps the primary one for criticism in this revolutionary epoch when art, ideas, mass movements, keep changing their nature, so that their most familiar features are often the most misleading.

For example, in evoking the irony that turns a creative "event" into a picture, Miss McCarthy draws an apt analogy with the Marxist revolution that seeks to "bring history to an end" but winds up by producing an authoritarian state. Here is a "law" that would seem to oblige us to judge acts of over-turn, whether in art or in politics, according to established categories of value.

YES, IF YOU ARE SPEAKING of a revolution that is ended. But to judge an event within the process of the revolution, you must first identify what is happening, in order to decide whether *at that moment* it is the voice of insurrection that you are hearing or the voice of the police; since, except to one opposed to all revolutions, it will matter in judging how good or bad the action is Also, you must be able to recognise the difference between a genuine uprising and a simulated uprising, that is, one fabricated according to the revolutionary "craft" by professionals who deliberately design it to resemble a spontaneous upheaval. Is this act of recognition one of æsthetic judgment? Be that as it may, ordinary concepts of good or bad government will not help towards a decision, any more than commonly accepted æsthetic principles will help in deciding which new works are worth while and which are poor precisely because they have simulated what is æsthetically valid in the new.

In other words, in regard to creation there are two ironies in operation, not just one: the mortal irony that changes a living event into a "picture on the wall," and the tragic and comic irony that causes a masquerade to expose itself, to the surprise of those who have been taken in by appearances. To criticise art and events *in the course of their development* requires finding a footing in both these ironies. If criticism, under the illusion that only one irony is at work, waits for æsthetics and "structure" to reassert themselves, it avoids the adventure of playing a part in events and gives credence to the superstition that intelligence kills or deals only with the dead.

BUT A PAINTING HANGS on the wall. Is its occupancy of the wall the function by which a painting to-day is to be defined, so that the idea of its "activity" results in what Miss McCarthy calls "a weird contradiction?" Only if, through the habit of looking back to other times, we forget the multiple existence which a painting now enjoys in separation from its physical body: its ghostly presence through reproduction in books and magazines that carry it *as picture* far from its durable being of paint and canvas; the intellectual character it takes on from the interpretations inevitably tacked to it by critics, historians, psychiatrists, philosophers of culture; its role in the political rivalry of states and factions and in the educational activities of international institutions; the power of transformation it wields over its own creator through the energy it accumulates on its passage through the social

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orbit. Is this proper behaviour for an object of æsthetic contemplation? Is the work of art still a *thing* or an image of a thing, waiting for the spectator's taste to respond to it? Or is it rather a quantity of energy released into the whole configuration or arena of a contending world? And if the latter, must an Action Painting, which reflects a consciousness of the changed nature of the work of art in our time, inevitably lose its character as an event in the interval following its creation? Will it not rather augment its activity the moment it leaves the studio? Are not even the "quiet" paintings of the past more and more being precipitated into motion and compelled to catch up with contemporary requirements?

If art in our time has been completing a transformation with respect to its objective nature as well as its interests, to apply to it canons derived from craftsmanship, as if perfection in making were still the essence of the work, is bound to show everything in reverse. Making for whom? Yet a poverty of terminology forces art critics and art faculties to interpret American abstract art of the past twenty years as if, in abolishing figuration, it were merely engaged in an arbitrary reduction in the number of "pictorial elements"—a streamlining of the manufacture of treasures.

Perhaps you cannot hang an event on the wall, only a picture. But this is a problem for the picture more than it is for events. For a wall implies a space in which to stand next to it. This space is now lacking. The Bolshevik Revolution may have turned into a picture on the wall, but it was a picture that pulled the entire globe into it, and even outer space. No room was left for the spectator who merely looks, as there was in the days when the earth had empty spots and the heavens were full.

Harold Rosenberg

International Commentary

The Dangerous Year

By Richard Lowenthal

1961, WE ALL FELT, was to see the resumption of serious East-West negotiations. The new American administration, unburdened by the collapse of last year's "summit talks" and acceptable to the Soviets as a partner, would, after a thorough review of its world position, submit fresh proposals for reducing the risks of war. Mr. Khrushchev, having provisionally settled the dispute with his Chinese allies and obtained endorsement for the objectives of "peaceful coexistence" from the Moscow world conference of Communist parties, would know exactly how far he could go in negotiations to secure them. The new round of meetings would begin on the most favourable ground possible—the Geneva three-power talks about a permanent ban on atomic tests, in which the common interest of both sides was more obvious than anywhere else; and as the date of their reopening approached, reports of President Kennedy's willingness to take the risk of imperfect inspection arrangements rather than the risk of an indefinite increase in the number of nuclear powers led to widespread forecasts of the conclusion of a treaty "by the summer" which would then create the right climate for the diplomatic discussion of more difficult subjects.

Yet when U.S. Ambassador Llewellyn Thompson saw Mr. Khrushchev in Novosibirsk on March 9, he received the impression that the Soviets had lost interest in a separate test ban agreement and were no longer willing to sign it ahead of a comprehensive treaty on "general and complete disarmament." This seemed to be both because they did not wish to commit themselves to specific inspection rules in advance of the latter, and because they doubted their own ability to keep China out of the "nuclear club" short of a general disarmament treaty. Since then, the behaviour of the Soviet delegates during the resumed Geneva talks has confirmed this dismal impression. Not only did they fail to show any serious interest in the carefully worked-out package of Western concessions, but they even went back on their previous agreement to have the control machinery headed by an independent neutral personality, demanding instead a tripartite board operating under the unanimity rule—*i.e.*, the

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same type of veto power they wish to impose on a "reformed" secretariat of the United Nations.

It is, of course, conceivable that these unexpected changes in the Soviet attitude may have been adopted only for bargaining purposes —*e.g.*, in order to force the West to bring France into the negotiations—and will be revised again in another tactical "turn." It is also possible (as the Soviets themselves have hinted) that they stem from a resigned admission that Russia will not be able anyhow to keep China out of the "nuclear club"—that if they agreed to a permanent test ban now, China would either refuse to join it or be able to insist successfully on Soviet deliveries of nuclear arms, unless the test ban was part of a wider agreement on "general and complete disarmament." But whatever the immediate and specific reasons, the new Soviet attitude also reflects a general difficulty that has lately increasingly manifested itself in East-West negotiation—a tendency towards a kind of "diplomatic escalation."

THE "ESCALATION OF WAR" is the modern term for the risk that a local "brushfire war" may, by the intervention of outside powers and the introduction of more destructive weapons, gradually be turned into a world-wide, nuclear conflagration. By analogy, I call diplomatic escalation the tendency to raise the stakes of any diplomatic dispute or negotiation for limited objectives, which by itself might be manageable, until it comes to involve the ultimate balance of world power and thus ceases to be manageable.

Indeed, the world-wide East-West conflict has now reached a stage at which the Soviets seem increasingly tempted to respond to all concrete diplomatic problems with proposals which, on analysis, turn out to imply ideas of "world government" or "world domination." Only yesterday, "world government under the rule of law" appeared to most statesmen as a kind of distant liberal utopia, which might be desirable in theory but could be approached in practice only by infinitesimal steps, if at all; while "Communist world domination" was regarded, except by some cranks, as an equally hypothetical long-term aim or danger, important for an understanding of the nature of the Communist faith and the ultimate motivating forces of Communist régimes, but safely remote from the realm of practical day-by-day diplomacy. To-day, those lofty visions of the political philosopher are acquiring an almost tangible meaning as potentialities involved in current diplomatic decisions and in the actual political strategy of the powers!

LET US BEGIN with Mr. Khrushchev's plan for "general and complete disarmament," *i.e.*, for the reduction of all national armed forces to levels required for purposes of internal security.

Its objective was unanimously endorsed by the United Nations Assembly in 1959, and—with more specific conditions—by the London conference of Commonwealth Premiers in March 1960. As the execution of such a plan would not by itself remove all conflicts of interest or ideology between states, nor the disproportion of armed strength between neighbouring states of different size, the possibility of aggression by the stronger against the weaker would continue to exist. Yet the small nations could no longer try to protect themselves against a neighbouring bully by an alliance with a more distant power, for the weapons of long-range action would be abolished. It follows that, to be compatible with national security for the small nations, "general and complete disarmament" requires the creation of an international force to protect the victims of aggression, and this has been recognised both in the latest version of Mr. Khrushchev's proposal, and in the recent Commonwealth resolution.

Now any scheme that proposes to combine general and complete disarmament and the abolition of military alliances with the creation of an international force against aggression is, in its essence, a scheme for world government. The international force alone will have weapons of long-range intervention, and it will have to be strong enough to defeat the domestic forces of the largest single power if they are used outside their legitimate territory. Hence the authority that can send that international force into action will have the power and responsibility of a world government. The whole plan stands or falls with its independence, impartiality, and capacity for action.

YET AT THE VERY MOMENT when Mr. Khrushchev conceded the need for an international force under his scheme—during the 1960 session of the United Nations Assembly—he also made clear beyond a doubt his irreconcilable opposition to any kind of world authority that would be free from a Soviet right of veto. The core of his grievance against Mr. Hammarskjoeld was precisely that the Secretary-General of the U.N. had succeeded, over a period of time and within the limits of the mandates given him by the Security Council and the General Assembly, in making his office the germ of a world executive authority. That Khrushchev objected to this rather than to Hammarskjoeld's specific actions was shown when, for all his vicious personal attacks on the latter, he announced that he would not consent to the

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election of any single successor, but would insist on his replacement by a tripartite board tied to the unanimity rule, with one of the three seats filled by the Soviet bloc. Since then the Soviets have underlined their opposition to any independent world authority, even with limited powers in a special field, by demanding a similar right of veto in any control authority to be set up under a treaty banning atomic tests.

We are thus faced with the fact that the Soviets are pressing for a form of total disarmament which requires, as its indispensable logical and practical complement, a world government in command of an international force—yet at the same time demanding the right to prevent that government from taking any action contrary to their own interests or policies. The latter is not, perhaps, surprising. Mr. Khrushchev and his comrades see the world as divided by an irreconcilable ideological conflict. They hope to win that struggle without world war; but at any rate they are determined to win it. Given that view of the world, it would be absurd for them to submit to any world government not dominated by their own side. Pending Communist world domination, they must insist on preserving the complete freedom of action of the "socialist world system," and paralysing any international authority that might in any circumstances interfere with it.

It follows that any negotiations about "general and complete disarmament" are bound to end in failure—not because the goal itself was not acceptable to the West, nor because the technical problems of stage-by-stage control (however complicated) would be insoluble, but because they must inevitably come up against the issue of "world government" which cannot be solved in an ideologically divided world.

THE ALTERNATIVES are, of course, partial agreements for specific types of arms limitation and control, designed in particular to reduce the risk of nuclear world war or of great-power intervention in certain "neutralised" regions. It is quite wrong to imagine, as is sometimes suggested, that the alternative to total disarmament is *merely* arms control—or, as the Soviets polemically call it, "control without disarmament." There may indeed be useful control schemes for particular weapons which would, if adopted, reduce the risk of war substantially, even apart from any disarmament. But given the fundamental fact that even the chief antagonists in the present divided world share an interest in avoiding a nuclear holocaust, something *more* could certainly be done.

This is not the place for a technical discussion of various types of nuclear strategy; but the main trend of strategic discussion in the United States has long been away from the impracticable reliance on massive nuclear retaliation against even local and conventional attack and towards a limitation of the nuclear deterrent to use against really vital threats. The Kennedy administration's review of American strategy seems to follow the same trend. If this should be confirmed, it may result in a definite reorientation of U.S. strategy towards "finite deterrence," which requires a limited number of retaliatory weapons with mobile bases (*e.g.*, submarines) that could not be destroyed by a surprise blow, yet would be sufficient to inflict "unacceptable damage" on an enemy. Such a concept tends to limit the arms race and to stabilise the "balance of terror." It may be adopted for realistic reasons by both sides even without formal agreement. But it will only have a chance if there is not at the same time a tendency for local crises to become more frequent and acute and to extend to increasingly vital spots.

In other words, the chances of an explicit or tacit agreement to stop the arms race in certain critical fields are likely to depend on the simultaneous willingness of the world's leading powers not so much to "keep the Cold War *out*" of certain areas (say, Africa or the Middle East or South-east Asia)—which is impossible—but to keep it *cold*. This could be done by agreement to respect the military neutrality of certain countries or regions, to establish no military bases there, and to send in no arms or military technicians.

AT THIS POINT, the prospects of arms limitation link up with the chances of "peaceful coexistence" or "peaceful competition" between the rival blocs and systems—the conduct of armament policy within the great powers and arms negotiation between them with the conduct of their general policy abroad. Here again, the American and Soviet leaders entered the new diplomatic round with sharply opposed concepts.

President Kennedy's first message to Congress defined "peaceful competition" as excluding not only direct military aggression, but also "subversion." He did not, however, use the latter term as it has often been used in American politics, as denoting any kind of Communist or pro-Communist propaganda. On the contrary: he explicitly admitted "competition for the minds of men." By "subversion" he clearly meant the support of violent revolution and civil war from outside—be it by money, arms, technicians, or diplomatic backing. It was this form of indirect warfare which he declared to be incompatible with peaceful competition, and which he pledged himself to fight, when used

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by the Communist powers, by counter-intervention with all appropriate means.

Against this, we must hold the latest Soviet definition of "peaceful coexistence," as contained in the declaration published last December by the Moscow world conference of Communist parties, and authoritatively commented on by Mr. Khrushchev himself in his subsequent report. According to this, peaceful coexistence is meant only to prevent wars between sovereign states, whether world-wide or local; it cannot and should not prevent civil wars or "just wars of liberation" arising from popular insurrections, which are inevitable as long as "imperialism" exists. On the contrary, "peaceful coexistence" is justified as creating the most favourable conditions for the development of such revolutionary wars; and the Communist powers are explicitly assigned the duty to support them so as to prevent their being crushed by "imperialist intervention" from outside. Thus the outside support of violent revolution and civil war which, according to Kennedy, was incompatible with "peaceful competition," is, according to Khrushchev, an essential part of "peaceful coexistence."

CLEARLY, the Kennedy concept of "peaceful competition" aimed at reducing military tension by stabilising the power situation, at any rate for a time. The Khrushchev concept of "peaceful coexistence" aims, on the contrary, at extending the realm of Communist power by a continuous offensive, even at the price of periodically increasing military tension, short of the risk of directly involving the Soviet Union in war. The latter policy is also an obstacle to any attempt to "keep the Cold War cold" in critical areas by neutralisation, as has lately been illustrated in Laos, where the Western offer to neutralise the country and to stop military support for either side in the civil war, was answered by the Soviets with weeks of stalling, during which they went on steadily supplying their own followers with arms and instructors.

Yet it is clearly impossible for one side alone to keep to the strict rules of "peaceful competition" and to abstain from indirect intervention in critical areas unless that side is resigned in advance to being defeated. The adoption by both sides of Mr. Khrushchev's type of coexistence, with no holds barred in indirect intervention anywhere, would not only create the worst possible climate for any negotiations on arms limitation, but might easily lead to the contest getting out of hand.*

There seems thus to be at present no bridge between the American and Russian positions—no common ground on which successful negotiation could be developed, be it in the field of disarmament, of regional neutralisation, or of a reduction of tension by a renunciation of indirect warfare. Mr. Khrushchev seems interested in negotiating only either for the propaganda of his general slogans ("general and complete disarmament"), or for the direct achievement of an extension of his power sphere, as he has long proposed for Berlin and would also be willing to do for Laos. Yet he has not only shown full awareness of the risks of nuclear world war, but has insisted, at the cost of considerable dispute with his Chinese comrades, on making the whole Communist movement conscious of the need and the possibility to avoid it. Why, then, does he make no effort to reduce the risk by serious negotiation? Why does he indulge in an increasingly reckless combination of declamatory peace talk with practical brinkmanship?

IT SEEMS TO ME that the answer is contained in those passages of the Moscow declaration which proclaim that the "world socialist system" is becoming "the decisive factor in the development of society," that the "imperialists" can no longer stop its advance, that "the socialist states . . . have become an international force exerting a powerful influence on world development," so that "there are now real opportunities of solving cardinal problems of modern times in a new way." What these words express is Mr. Khrushchev's conviction that the Soviet bloc has already an edge over its opponents in the struggle for world power—not because the "balance of terror" has disappeared, but because it is likely to paralyse the West's capacity of resisting indirect revolutionary attack. Mr. Khrushchev seems to think that so long as he and his allies refrain from direct and open aggression across their frontiers, there will be no risk of international war; and that in any contest waged by the indirect use of revolutionary violence, his side is bound to win.†

* As this article goes to press, the U.S.-supported attempt at an invasion of Cuba by exiles opposed to the Castro régime has strikingly illustrated these risks. Despite the failure of this ill-conceived enterprise it would be unwise to overlook the fact that similar attempts by one side or another could still be repeated in different conditions with greater success—and might then contain even greater risks of "escalation".

† From Khrushchev's expression of that confident conviction, Mr. Walter Lippmann has concluded that this aspect of the Cold War is not his "primary interest," and that he would not go to war about it. To me, it seems a more plausible conclusion that this is the aspect on which he does not want to negotiate, and which might involve him in war against his original intentions if his confidence should prove unjustified.

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It is in that sense that "world domination" is ceasing to be a distant goal or danger and is becoming an immediate and practical issue in world affairs: because Mr. Khrushchev considers that "final victory" *without* world war is already within his grasp, that serious negotiation to preserve a measure of stability is no longer needed, and that every local conflict can now be exploited to prove that his camp is already the stronger one. It is only on the basis of such a view that both his wild attacks on the structure of the United Nations and his rejection of the chances offered by the latest Western test ban proposals seem to fall into place.

If that is true, Soviet policy at the present critical moment is determined by an erroneous estimate of the relation of world forces. But that amounts to an extremely dangerous state of affairs—for it is from such errors about the relation of forces between approximately matched opponents that unwanted, catastrophic wars have arisen in the past.

TO MANY, I suspect, this may sound like an unnecessarily alarmist estimate of the situation. It certainly is an unorthodox one, at variance with the views of some of the leading Western diplomatic experts on Russia. Their opinions, based in some cases on many years of intimate knowledge of the country and its régime, deserve the respect, not of blind trust, but of serious discussion.

Broadly, this school has long regarded Khrushchev as a pragmatic "manager," primarily concerned with improving the performance of the Soviet economy and the standard of living of the Russian people—and hence inclined to seek external peace and stability, to look for chances to reduce the burden of armaments, and to rely for the ultimate victory of Communism on long-term success in peaceful economic competition with the West. They have felt that in trying to stick to this concept, the Soviet leader has had to struggle all the time to free himself from the web of traditional revolutionary doctrine as represented not only by doctrinaire "remnants" in his own mind, but by the pressure of his Chinese allies, of the international Communist movement, and of the more rigidly militant members of the upper ranks of the Soviet hierarchy. Whenever Khrushchev immersed himself in domestic reforms, or when he set out to charm President Eisenhower and the American business community, they considered they were hearing his authentic voice. When he broke up the summit conference, threatened the United States with rockets on Castro's behalf, or tried to disrupt the machinery of the United Nations, they wondered whether his position was imperilled or whether a coalition between the Chinese and Soviet domestic diehards was "forcing" him to adopt this line. By the time the Kennedy administration came in, these experts pictured a Khrushchev who, by making verbal concessions to the ideological extremists in the Moscow declaration, had gained a breathing space for new negotiations with the West but would have to deliver some tangible results before the next party congress in October. Otherwise, they concluded (not without encouragement from Soviet sources), he might by then be forced dangerously to revise his concept of peaceful coexistence, or even be replaced altogether by some rigid fanatic.

WHAT IS CLEARLY TRUE in this analysis is that both the opposed tendencies—towards a concentration on peaceful economic progress, and towards international revolutionary militancy—are inherent in the present situation of the Soviet Union. The first corresponds to the needs of the developing Soviet society, to the new hopes of its workers and peasants as well as to the growing self-confidence of its managers and technicians. But the second springs *not only* from the pressure of Chinese and other foreign Communists and from the tempting opportunities offered to a revolutionary power by the retreat of ancient empires in a world in rapid flux, but *also* from the need to preserve the party régime in Russia itself. For the ideological belief in world revolution is not just an edifying forecast of the millennium which has been inherited from the distant past and to which lip-service is paid on national holidays—it is an essential part of the legitimation for continuing the monopoly of the ruling party inside the Soviet Union, and of the cement which holds it together.

What many Western diplomats seem to overlook in their attempts to read Mr. Khrushchev's "inner mind," and to distinguish between his real and his assumed beliefs, is the crucial fact that his power rests on the party machine. He won power as the exponent of party supremacy against the advocates of "non-ideological" economic and administrative efficiency, and it is through his control of the party that he dominates the entire machinery of the Soviet state.

Soviet society as it exists to-day could well discard much of its official ideology and of the traditional ties binding it to revolutionary movements all over the world. But the ruling Communist party cannot do that without renouncing its right to exist, and Khrushchev cannot do it without losing his title to rule. Only because of this have the Chinese been able to exert pressure on Soviet foreign policy by raising the "ideological" question of international revolutionary

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solidarity. Khrushchev and his colleagues in the Soviet hierarchy have had to respond to that pressure and to reassert their authority in the world Communist movement by pointing to their increased ability to support revolutionary struggles everywhere without open involvement in war—thanks to the edge they now claim to have in the world balance of power.

Nor is there any reason to doubt that Khrushchev himself genuinely believes that he has this edge. On the contrary, he has acted on this conviction ever since Russia launched the first *Sputnik* in 1957. Since then, he has been provoking one international crisis after another, from the Turkish frontier to Quemoy and from Berlin to Laos. He has only deliberately reduced international tension during the limited period in 1959–60 when he hoped that in a calmer atmosphere, he might extract some substantial concession from the moribund Eisenhower administration. He has no such hopes now; and the latest Soviet success in penetrating outer space has only increased his commitment to speedy advance on this earth.

If this view of Soviet policy is right, the danger to world peace is not that Mr. Khrushchev might be "overthrown" or forced to abandon his concept of co-existence at the next party congress: the danger is Mr. Khrushchev armed with his present concept—not because he wants war, but because he overestimates his chances to force major Western retreats without war.

Does it, then, follow that the attempt to negotiate seriously for specific agreements with the Soviet Union, such as a nuclear test ban or armament limitations or neutralisation of some countries or regions—agreements which involve no visions of world government and concede no advances to Soviet world domination, but do offer chances of reducing the risk of war—should be abandoned as hopeless? Of course not.

But to be effective in Mr. Khrushchev's present mood, the offer of such agreements must be supplemented by a concerted Western effort to convince him that his estimate of the relation of forces and of the irresistible potential of revolutionary wars is wrong. This involves, as always, political and economic measures to remove in good time the causes for revolutionary outbreaks. But it also involves such military measures as President Kennedy's plans to increase the mobile "fire brigade" forces of the United States, and the conventional forces of the West in general.

Strength alone, of course, is never a substitute for negotiation. But in dealing with an opponent who believes that the road to world domination lies open before him, it would be folly to negotiate *without* strength.

Fear and Failure in the Congo

By David Holden

There never was a crisis like the Congo for leaving so many commentators so far behind events. Not just from month to month, or from week to week, or even from day to day, but sometimes literally from hour to hour the situation has undergone apparently fundamental reversals—now this man on top, now that, while whole nations have scrambled desperately from one foundering policy to another and back again, like ship-wrecked mariners searching for a decent bit of flotsam to bear their weight.

I recall one hectic day in Leopoldville, last September when, in the course of a single, unbroken ten-hour stint in the telex office I wrote four different stories of 1,000 words apiece on the day's news, and every one of them was overtaken as soon as it was completed by some fresh development. Characteristically, the day ended in total frustration when all the circuits broke down before I had transmitted a word to London.

And now here is poor Mr. Legum, daring to put his news and views into a book, and looking—for all the speed with which Penguins got him on the market—like a period piece already.* If he were not such an industrious, as well as an intelligent, journalist, it might be a dreadful warning to us all to stick to our daily chores and let the inevitable mistakes we make to-day wrap up to-morrow's fish and chips. Happily,

* *Congo Disaster*. By Colin Legum. (A Penguin Special, 2s. 6d.)

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however, Mr. Legum is not just one of those boring chaps who re-hashes his last assignment and deserves to be remaindered before his book has gone to press. He has done his homework properly, and the result is that he offers, in the first two-thirds of his book, as neat and useful a summary of the historical background to the crisis as we can reasonably ask for in the space.

This is important, for to devote so much of his space to history shows that Mr. Legum has got his perspective right. The daily alarms and upheavals are all very well for winning the headlines, and many a correspondent has felt his ego burgeoning more than usual in the Congo at the sight of his stories so regularly leading the paper; but even the least conscientious of them sometimes have longed for a lull when they might sit back and think, and even, perhaps, attempt to explain the context of their on-the-spot reports. Mr. Legum's little book at least fills some of the gaps which the newspapers have been compelled to leave. In particular, it valuably reminds us that the Congo débâcle was not something suddenly thrown up out of nowhere by "the wind of change," but that it had its roots deeply embedded in the whole eighty years of Belgian rule, from the brutal personal régime of Leopold II, through the excessive paternalism of the Belgian Governments which later assumed responsibility for the country, to the final dithering retreat of the last eighteen months before independence.

THE BELGIANS ARE NOT spared by Mr. Legum; but there is no reason why they should be. As he rightly points out, many Belgians have been more severe in their criticisms—and there is no more painful and more salutary experience in the Congo than to meet the honest Belgian who seeks, amid embarrassed sympathy, to explain or indict his country's bitter failure.

For failure, shaming and shameful, it has been. Even when they had outgrown Leopold's early brutalities, the Belgians remained, collectively and often individually, grasping, obtuse, indecisive, and—at the end—panicky. Long before the crash came last July the Belgian Government had lost its nerve and any idea of coherent policy; and the *colons* were sending out their money and their wives as fast as ships and aircraft could carry them. The atmosphere of fear thus created may well have materially influenced the course of events in that first, fatal week of independence; and the resentful stubbornness with which many Belgians are now returning to the Congo is surely storing up new trouble for the future. Until recently their Government's co-operation with the United Nations was minimal, although it is now increasing; and individual Belgians still often refuse to assist U.N. officials in the field. Even worse, alarmingly few of them (outside picked officials in the Ministries) have learned yet to adjust their relations with the Africans to the circumstances of independence. In Bakwanga, for instance, the capital of Mr. Albert Kalonji's "autonomous state of South Kasai," and the centre of the diamond mining activities of the Belgian firm of *Forminière*, the company club is still entirely closed to non-whites. Not only are Congolese denied membership, but also coloured officers of the U.N. forces—which means that, for reasons of discipline and solidarity, white U.N. officers, too, cannot pass its doors. Mr. Legum is right to suggest that unless the Belgians learn their lessons better "they could still end up as the Dutch did in Indonesia—expropriated and unwanted."

EQUALLY, HOWEVER, he is right to discount two notions still surprisingly prevalent even outside the Communist and professionally anti-imperialist circles in which they have become accepted dogma: (*a*) that the Belgian Government deliberately engineered the collapse of last July in order to restore a "new colonialism" to the Congo, and (*b*) that Messrs. Tshombe, Kasavubu, and Mobutu are simply Belgian stooges.

Of the first charge there has never been any evidence; and from personal experience in Leopoldville shortly before independence, I would have said that the Belgian Government by then was in such a state of nervous paralysis that it probably could not even have envisioned, let alone carried through, such an absurdly Machiavellian scheme.

The second allegation appears at first sight to have more substance, especially in the case of President Tshombe, whose dependence upon Belgian support in Katanga is so obvious. But dependence for Tshombe has never meant subservience. In fact, he has used the Belgians far more than they have used him; and although his Government employs nearly as many Belgians now as the Katanga provincial Government did before independence, he has not hesitated to get rid of those he did not want. All three men—Tshombe, Kasavubu, and Mobutu—remain, like most Congolese, suspicious of the Belgians, and there is little doubt that the last two would have preferred, if they could, to have obtained technical aid and personnel from any other non-Communist source. But once the United Nations Organisation had refused officially to support General Mobutu's College of Commissioners, on the grounds that it was not a legal Government, the Leopoldville leaders had no choice. They had to get help from somewhere; only Belgium and the Com-

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munist states were willing to act independently of the U.N.—and Lumumba's ready acceptance of Communist help had been one of the chief reasons for Mobutu's action against him. To Belgium, then, they turned, willy-nilly, for teachers and doctors (of whom the U.N. has been unable to produce, so far, more than a handful), for administrators and technicians, and for military training.

THIS ASPECT of the "return of the Belgians" needs to be understood, especially in some other African countries like Ghana which have become so much holier-than-thou about the Congo, because it explains why the Congolese welcome the Belgians back even though they may not like them. They know, better than anyone else, that they cannot do without them —especially in the absence of any U.N. alternative.

There need not be any dispute over the removal of foreign mercenaries from Mr. Tshombe's army in Katanga. They have become an increasing embarrassment to practically everybody except Tshombe and the Communists, who see in them a standing excuse for criticising Western intervention in the Congo and for justifying their own support of Mr. Gizenga in Stanleyville. But over the rest of the Belgians employed by the Congolese, the U.N. will have to move carefully, preferably absorbing many of them in its own organisation—giving them, as it were, new hats in old jobs—in spite of the inevitable protests that will come from Moscow and elsewhere.

BY NOW, however, we have left Mr. Legum far behind. In the last third of his book, dealing with events since independence, he does not get beyond the end of October—when most of the Belgians still had not returned—and even a despairing effort in the introduction to bring matters up to date takes us no further than the beginning of December. In this section history is, perforce, abandoned for topical journalism, with its attendant perils. There are repeated spelling mistakes (Bangwala for Bakwanga and Bomboka for Bomboko) and curious inadequacies of fact or explanation. Why, for instance, does he not clarify the difference between the Baluba of Kasai and the Baluba of Katanga—those two groups, now virtually unrelated (they do not even speak the same language) who must have confused millions of newspaper readers, just as they have confused dozens of correspondents in the past nine months? Why is there scarcely a mention of the gigantic American airlift, still continuing and paid for entirely by the United States Government, without which the U.N. operation, in a literal as well as a metaphorical sense, would never have got off the ground?

But beyond these niggling questions there is the simple fact that, on the Congo crisis as it is now, Mr. Legum is simply out-of-date. Since he finished his book, Lumumba has been killed and, by many Congolese, already almost forgotten. "Grief," they say in Africa, "lasts three days." The African states have split wide open between the unitarians and the federalists, the pan-Africanists and the individualists, the Casablanca group (Ghana, Guinea, Mali, Morocco, and U.A.R.) and the Brazzaville lot (the French ex-Community states, with a few others like Nigeria and Tunisia). Dr. Nkrumah, of whose "statesmanlike" policy in the Congo Mr. Legum is a somewhat indiscriminate admirer, has gone off in a huff with the Communists and his Casablanca friends to recognise the régime of Mr. Gizenga in Stanleyville as the "legal, central Government" of the Congo although there is neither legal nor practical justification for such a claim. The other Congolese leaders have met in Tananarive and proclaimed a vague confederation; and at the time of writing there are further attempts in progress to secure a *rapprochement* between them and Mr. Gizenga. The Security Council, meanwhile, has given the U.N. Organisation in the Congo a "stronger" mandate, such as Mr. Legum would seem to want; but no remarkable changes have occurred as a result so far. Indeed, the most hopeful development of all so far may be simply that some of the steam seems to have gone out of the Congo crisis as far as other conditions are concerned—some of the limelight at last has been turned elsewhere. Cuba, Algeria, Laos, the Commonwealth crisis over South Africa, the whole tactical engagement of Kennedy and Khrushchev as the new American administration gropes for its footing, and the absence—since the death of Lumumba—of any really dominating Congolese personality, all have tended lately to put the Congo in perspective. Nothing was ever more needed, for surely no crisis was ever so inflated by international cant.

FROM THE START it has existed on two levels. There is the practical problem of 14 million people desperately needing help; and there is the international conflict of the Cold War. Between these two the link is the U.N. Organisation in the Congo, but because by its very nature the U.N. has become the chief arena of the Cold War, the second problem has always overshadowed the first.

In the beginning there were those who thought the U.N. could somehow "keep the Cold War out of Africa." There were others who thought it might develop in the Congo as

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a new, constructive "third force" between colonialism and nationalism, or as a superior channel for technical aid to under-developed countries. It is difficult to be hopeful now, for the U.N. has clearly failed in all these objects.

Perhaps Mr. Legum would say that it had not. Writing some months ago, he lists three U.N. successes which, he says, "overshadow all its weaknesses and failures." They are: that it has prevented a decline into chaos or anarchy; that it has enabled the Belgians to return by ensuring their security; and that it has kept the Congo from "being swept into the arena of an armed conflict between rival foreign powers." Well, I don't know what he would call the conditions now obtaining in the provinces of Kivu, north Kasai, north Katanga, and parts of Orientale, but they look uncommonly like chaos or anarchy to me. To these areas the Belgians have not returned; indeed, many of those who remained there are still trying to get out. Only in specific emergencies, and then only partially, has the U.N. been able to protect either Europeans or Africans from hostile authorities or belligerent soldiery; for long-term security civilians of all kinds are still dependent upon the attitude of the Congolese leaders and their armies. It would be hard to maintain, therefore, that the U.N. had done more than blunt the edges of conflict or chaos in the Congo, just as it is hard to maintain that it has done more than deaden the impact of international rivalry. To imply that it has prevented "another Korea," or "another Spain," is to assume, too readily in my view, that the Russians were both willing and able to sustain large-scale armed intervention in the Congo in the face of Western hostility. What the U.N. has accomplished is a series of invaluable first-aid tasks such as helping to restore order—however tenuous and superficial—to some parts of the country, re-opening some essential communications, maintaining water supplies and providing emergency medical teams and famine relief.

These are important contributions, and the U.N. may have been better placed to provide them than any individual nation, or *ad hoc* group of nations. But the U.N. has never been able to go further, to act upon any vision of the Congo's future structure—such as was implied in Lumumba's proposal to reconquer Katanga—because such action involves *political choices* upon which neither the Congolese nor the member nations are agreed. This inability has been at the root of all Mr. Hammarskjoeld's difficulties with the Congolese leaders, and it was the basis of his interpretation of the Security Council's first resolution on the Congo, by virtue of which he rejected Lumumba's demand for the use of U.N. troops and facilities to subdue Katanga on the grounds that it would be an unwarrantable intervention in the Congo's internal affairs.

Unfortunately, it was soon clear that, while positive intervention was ruled out, negative intervention was inevitable. With 18,000 troops (soon rising, perhaps, to 24,000) stationed in the Congo it could not be otherwise; and with the Congo being debated almost every week in the passionate forum of New York every practical step for resuscitating the country foundered on somebody's objections. Soon, the situation was frozen in the grip of the Cold War—and so it has remained, with the Russians trying to destroy Mr. Hammarskjoeld, the Belgians and some of the Afro-Asians attempting to intervene for their own purposes, and most of the western powers, while relatively passive, trying at the same time to protect the Secretary-General and to persuade the U.N. into empirical support of the *de facto* Congolese authorities without too much attention to the political niceties. Mr. Hammarskjoeld, meanwhile, has sought to protect himself, and perhaps the U.N. as an institution, by playing off one group against another, to the detriment of his avowed impartiality in the Congo.

Thus, far from "keeping the Cold War out of Africa"—an ambition that nobody can fulfil in independent Africa anyway—the U.N. presence in the Congo has ensured its arrival in Africa in its most frustrating form, as an almost pure exercise in power diplomacy. Where other countries have been wooed with technicians and money from one side and steel mills and jet fighters from another, the Congolese, needing help more than anyone else before them, have been denied any gifts at all. Except for first-aid, they have got little but confusion and frustration out of nine months of U.N. action and a vast expenditure of international funds.

And that brings us to the crux of the present problem, which is not "Should the United Nations be in the Congo at all?" but—given the fact of its presence—how can it best set about helping the Congolese? Because, unless it does help the Congolese better than it has done so far, no amount of pompous talk about the personal prestige of Mr. Hammarskjoeld, or the dignity and authority of the U.N., can save either the Secretary-General or the institution from ultimate discredit. This, surely, is the real danger to the U.N., and to the world, from the present Russian tactics.

Mr. Legum's answer to all this—and he is in distinguished company—would have been "a stronger mandate." I do not know whether this

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is still his view, but in his book he suggests that the U.N. might have done better if it had frankly intervened, first in Katanga and then against General Mobutu's *coup*, on behalf of the legal (*i.e.*, the Lumumba) Government, while also disarming and reorganising the *Force Publique*. These are tempting propositions; but the facts are that forcible intervention in Katanga was unlikely ever to have secured international agreement, especially with the apparent tranquillity prevailing in Katanga at the time, and that Lumumba was legally dismissed by President Kasavubu, under the *loi fondamentale*, before Mobutu staged his *coup*. Mobutu always acknowledged Kasavubu's legal authority as Head of State, and expressly eschewed any intention of suspending Parliament for more than a limited period (originally December 31) during which he hoped the politicians would "come to their senses." One of the U.N.'s difficulties at the time was precisely to decide where "legality" lay.

It is possible that there was a moment, at the very beginning, when the *Force Publique* might have been disarmed without too much trouble. Certainly, both the Ghanaians in Leopoldville under General Alexander, and the Moroccans in Matadi, were initially successful in disarming sizeable units until their action was countermanded by the then supreme commander, General Van Horn, who was presumably acting on the instructions of Mr. Hammarskjoeld. But disarmament by force seems a pretty hopeless project now, as the Congolese have made clear by their violent reactions to even a hint of such a policy. Since the first days of the crisis, no Congolese leader —least of all, Mr. Lumumba—has been willing to tolerate the disarming of the *Force Publique*. In short, what is really implied by the advocates of the "strong line" is a *de facto* U.N. trusteeship in the Congo, imposed if necessary against the will of its people. Quite apart from the immense, and in many ways unhappy, significance of such a precedent, it is fear of this development that has caused most of the worst crises between the U.N. Organisation in the Congo and the Congolese. Their independence was not won from the Belgians to be sacrificed immediately, whatever the justification, to an even less decisive and efficient master.

Surely it is clear by now, in fact, that unless the U.N. can win the confidence of the Congolese it can accomplish, in the long run, little that is worth while. Admittedly, this is easier in theory than in practice, for the Congolese have proved to be as suspicious, fearful, and intractable as anyone in the world. On the other hand, once their confidence has been won they have often proved co-operative, malleable, and intensely eager to learn. But fear is at the root of most of their difficulties. Both as individuals and as a people, they are obsessed with it; and Mr. Legum brilliantly quotes a passage from one of Joseph Conrad's stories about the Congo of seventy years ago that illustrates this fact. Two white traders, who have themselves succumbed to fear of "things vague, uncontrollable, and repulsive," finally abandon their outpost in the bush, leaving the people of the village

> *mourning for those they had lost by the witchcraft of white men, who had brought wicked people into the country. The wicked people had gone, but fear remained. Fear always remains.*

That was in the days when Europe had suddenly descended upon the Congolese for the first time. Now, again, history has suddenly come too close to them and, bewildered by their swift accession to independence, distressed as well as elated by the absence of their Belgian masters, they are apt to strike out blindly at the first strange footfall, the first alien shadow. They fear nature, men, ideas and events with equal force because, from living in a world where only a little while ago everything was ordained for them, they have been catapulted into a world where nothing is certain any more. Is there any wonder that tribal loyalties have been revived? or—just as significant in a smaller way, perhaps—that, in spite of attacks upon priests and nuns in various parts of the Congo, congregations and communicants at the Christian missions, especially those of the Roman Catholic Church, have tended to increase during this first year of independence? What these people need is reassurance and understanding; what they have had from the U.N. has been, too often, confusion of authority at the top and inadequate and inefficient handling in the field.

To some extent, of course, the second failing is a result of the first. Ideally, the jobs in the field should go to men already widely experienced in African affairs, or, at least, in colonial government. But if the older and more powerful nations which have a reservoir of such men are ruled out for political reasons—and the Cold War in the U.N. ensures that they are—where else are they to come from?

Answer: practically nowhere.

The result is that, out of some 450 expatriate civilians in the Congo operation (and excluding such junior employees as secretaries and the like), it is hard to think of more than half a dozen of first-rate calibre. Some of the senior officials are palpably out of their depth. Even

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Mr. Rajeshwar Dayal, an able and admirably toughened diplomat with many of the qualities necessary to his job as the Secretary-General's personal representative, lacks the one absolutely vital characteristic of the right personality. Too aloof, too formal, too much the Oxford Brahmin, he conveys to the Congolese an air of personal superiority that is even more antipathetic than a possibly hostile policy. If, as is reported, Mr. Dayal is to remain in the Congo, the conjunction of his leadership with the presence of 5,000 Indian troops in the U.N. force is likely to convince many of the Congolese that an Afro-Asian, or Indian, plot is afoot to deprive them of their independence. To politicians and diplomats comfortably installed in the glass-house on the East River, this may seem absurd; but it is around such simple, yet subtle, matters of psychology that the U.N. operation in practice turns.

AN INCAUTIOUS STATEMENT from some delegate in the Security Council—a machine-gun set up in the wrong place—an armed patrol sent out at the wrong moment—an aeroplane with an unknown passenger—even a personal visit rebuffed or a telephone call refused—these are the things that easily provoke incidents between the U.N. and the Congolese.

Incidents lead to indignation—threats in the Security Council—formal letters of protest from the U.N. secretariat—formal rejection of the protests by the Congolese—and a steady downward spiral of recrimination, resentment, and fear, ending in such affairs as the battle of Matadi in March.

Yet these things need not happen. Given patience, foresight, and the will to learn and to help among the U.N. personnel, the confidence of the Congolese can be won—especially if the Belgian Government is now more willing to help. The Nigerian police in Leopoldville, for example, have had joint unarmed patrols with the local police ever since January in spite of the language barrier and the political alarms of February–March. Indonesian, Malayan, and some other military units in the field have achieved similar successes with units of the Congolese National Army. A few individual U.N. officials have established fruitful liaison with their Congolese opposite numbers when their colleagues have been floundering in confusion, dislike, and resentment. So much depends on the men—and those who generally get on best are, quite simply, those who know their job best. The battle-trained troops (Indonesians and Malayans again) generally inspire more confidence than the soldiers who have never been further than their training camps before; and the genuine technical experts or administrators, with relevant practical experience, do better than the academics and Geneva civil servants whom Mr. Hammarskjoeld seems to favour.

BUT THERE ARE FAR TOO FEW in both groups, and as yet there is no sign that Mr. Hammarskjoeld is properly aware of the inadequacies of the rest. It is surely absurd, for example, that, after nine months, the U.N. does not employ, as far as I know, a single anthropologist or sociologist who could be regarded as an expert on the Congo and its peoples. Nor do most of the men who are employed show any great curiosity about the country. On the contrary, they show a resolute, and remote, distaste for their whole environment. This may be understandable, for the Congo nowadays is a thankless place either to study or to work in; but it is not excusable. The Congo problem has challenged the U.N. like nothing else before; it demands first-rate men; but the operation in the field impresses most observers as ineffably second-rate.

PERHAPS, in the end, we shall be forced to the conclusion that it is in the nature of the U.N. to be second-rate and impractical in operations of this kind. Certainly it is the intention of the Russians to make it so if they can; and it seems fair to assume that if one or other of the super-powers wishes to destroy the U.N.'s capacity for practical action as opposed to mere debate, there is not much we can do about it. Meanwhile, however, we can still do our best to salvage what is left of the U.N.'s reputation in the Congo, beginning with the acceptance of a few fundamental notions.

First, the Congo is independent, whether we like it or not. That means that nobody—not even the U.N.—has a right to tell its people what to do, short of a very radical change indeed in our political philosophy.

Second, for the good of the Congolese and the U.N., the problem should be seen as essentially a practical one of helping 14 million people, rather than as an abstract exercise in the Cold War.

Third, this means that the U.N. must concentrate on winning the confidence of the Congolese through immediate and continuing co-operation with the principal authorities, and especially through much closer *personal* contacts than have hitherto been established. If necessary, *unanimity* in New York—which is unattainable anyway—must be sacrificed in favour of action sanctioned by a *majority* vote, as, for instance, in support of the essential legality of President Kasavubu's position as head of state.

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Fourth, this in turn means that the Western powers should not be quite so regularly intimidated either by the Communists or by the more extreme, Casablanca, elements among the Afro-Asian nations.

Fifth, nobody is going to save either the Congo or the U.N. by assuming that Africa can somehow be insulated from the Cold War. No insulating material exists that will serve that purpose.

These may seem a flimsy set of conclusions to emerge from such a shattering experience as the Congo crisis, but the ground on all sides is so uncertain that there is really no foundation for firmer, bolder statements. We have all had a setback in the Congo. We have all suffered fear and failure. Perhaps we can only get going again at all by harshly reducing our expectations.

Nuclear Stalemate?

SINCE IT WOULD take an inordinate amount of space to disentangle the many contradictions in which Professor Blackett [ENCOUNTER, April] has gotten enmeshed, I shall limit myself to the following three points.

1. The author seems to assert that the present nuclear stalemate is stable and that therefore no aggression (of a major kind) will occur. This is clearly a question of fact. Those who deny it are criticised for not having good enough intellectual and methodological tools for saying so—as may very well be the case. But I am surprised that a physicist would so easily judge a tremendously complicated social and military condition as being "stable," when he must be aware of the great difficulties of determining stability of infinitely more simple physical systems. In fact the stability of any physical system ultimately is only established experimentally and as far as nuclear weapons and warfare are concerned there exists no experimental evidence whatsoever. And suppose that there is doubt about the stability of the deterrent at present—as there is—does that not justify the search for systems that are at least secure against surprise attack? We are certainly moving in this direction and if no accidents occur, and no technological upheavals happen, we may reach the point at which Professor Blackett sees us already at present. Instead of stability it would be better to talk about invulnerability of the deterrent force as the first goal. The force also has to be powerful and convincing, *i.e.*, the would-be aggressor must be convinced that there exists some condition, some type of aggression, under which the force would be used and effectively render him unacceptable damage.

2. In my writings on defence[1] I have not argued merely for *more* armament and *more* expenditure but for a secure deterrent, for a *change* in armaments. But even if we had to spend much more, we could easily afford it, especially when considering the alternatives of obliteration or surrender. The *main point* of my thesis is, however, that it is in our interest not only to possess an invulnerable deterrent force ourselves, but also for the *other* side to be invulnerable. This argument derives directly from the theory of games of strategy which Professor Blackett dislikes so much. If this result be "bizarre" I am willing to let it be so characterised. The point is, however, that it is simple and thus also becomes accessible to common sense, thereby fulfilling one of Professor Blackett's desiderata regarding discussions of these matters. How could game theory be "dangerous," and in particular in view of the above conclusion? And why is this theory "irrelevant to decision making" and "amoral"? If there is any better substitute we should be told, but nothing is offered but a verbal argument that is hardly an equivalent to the mathematical theory. Is physical theory perhaps "moral?" Does this word have any meaning when examining facts and their interrelations, as well as logical structures? I feel that Professor Blackett is carried away by emotions where one should be careful to avoid them in order to be able to stick to the facts, no matter how painful this may be.

3. Regarding the streak of social pessimism attributed to me, the following remark may be in order: I do not see how one can be optimistic at present and do not understand why it is a crime not to conform to "the traditional extrovert optimism of America." In my book I have expressed deep regret for the "complex intermingling of war with a fast developing science" and have stated that this "poses the greatest danger to humanity." It will be difficult to deny the validity of this observation. I have said that the statement that "War is the father of all things" is true in a "singularly perverted

[1] *The Question of National Defense*, 2nd revised edition, New York, Random House (1961), "Effective and Secure Deterrence," Roy. Can. Air Force Staff Coll. Journal (1960); and "The n-country Problem," *Fortune*, March 1961.

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sense," thereby hoping to express a feeling of despair and a judgment of disapproval—from a human point of view—of the fact that present pursuits of science are so deeply related to war and war preparations. This intermingling of the two areas differs from country to country; it is certainly highly significant in the United States and the U.S.S.R. After the first stimulus a scientific field may separate itself from its connections with war, only to be drawn into it again. Consider genetics, seemingly far removed —yet everyone knows its present connections with the problems of fall-out and space research, both of which certainly derive from matters of defence: atomic energy and missiles. As a consequence research in genetics is supported by the Atomic Energy Commission and the Defense Department.

IT IS EASY TO OVERSTATE either side of the case, but it is well-nigh impossible to deny that the tremendous progress of science will continue to pose great threats to humanity if it persistently leads to the construction of new weapons of the most varied kind. In this connection one should recall Khrushchev's claims of January 1960 that his scientists had developed a "fantastic new weapon making all existing ones obsolete."

Only the establishment of an *"Open World,"* as envisaged by Niels Bohr and others, will enable us to prevent that science further stimulates the arms race. But the world is *not* open and a pessimistic view seems more justified than Professor Blackett's belief that everything is in good order and that the deterrent against large-scale war is presently stable.

Oskar Morgenstern

Politics and the Novel

A Letter to Patrick O'Donovan — By CONSTANTINE FITZGIBBON

MY DEAR PATRICK,

Reviewing my novel, *When the Kissing Had to Stop*, in a recent issue of *The New Republic*, you made certain statements about my point of view and, obliquely, about liberalism in general, which seem to me worth answering—largely in the hope that this answer may provoke you to elucidate your own point of view and that of the "liberals" for whom, I take it, you speak.

Let me, quickly, deal with one personal aspect of your review. You compare my novel with a book by Saki called *When William Came* which you describe as anti-semitic and permeated with an inane and sentimental boy-scout patriotism. I have not read this book, but since I am neither anti-semitic nor, as you state handsomely elsewhere, that sort of patriot, I fail to see why this novel was dragged into your notice of mine. Had you not been a friend for over twenty years, I would assume that it was a smear-by-association, of the type that you despised so heartily when you were the *Observer*'s Washington correspondent during the McCarthy period.

Since, however, this explanation is ruled out, I take it that you compare my novel with Saki's for the rather simple reason that both are cast in the immediate future—or what was the immediate future at their respective times of publication. And this in turn would indicate that you do not recognise the existence, or perhaps fully understand the purpose, of the political novel as such. Reading the reviews that my novel has had (and I am referring, with a few exceptions, to the *literary* reviews), I have been struck by a general failure of the critics to understand this *genre* and hence to judge such a novel on its merits. One critic, in the *Irish Times*, commented that it failed as a thriller; your own newspaper, since the novel is cast in the future, reviewed it along with the science-fiction titles of the week; others lumped it in with love-stories, historical fiction, and so on. I do not believe that a political play would be so treated, for Shaw created a tradition that the dramatic critics accept: a revival of *Arms and the Man* would hardly be confused with a revival, if it should happen, of *The Chocolate Soldier*.

BUT THE ENGLISH ARE NOT accustomed to seeing their politics treated imaginatively—as, say, are the French. Politics here are something for the politicians, or at least for discussion in purely political terms. English novels deal with private lives, with fantasy, and to a rather limited extent with social problems. In times of crisis, a novel such as *Coningsby* or *Love on the Dole* will deal with social problems in overtly political terms, that is to say, will grapple with political realities imaginatively. Even so the tradition is Dickensian, rather than that of Rousseau. (I have not read Trollope's political novels, but have been told that they have as little to do with politics as his Barchester novels

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have to do with theology.) And novels that deal directly with social problems, as opposed to social manners and behaviour, are themselves surprisingly rare. For in general novels here are, in Graham Greene's phrase, "entertainments." Which is, of course why, in the "serious" Sunday papers, a book about sea-shells or the memoirs of some forgotten admiral will command more space than the six best novels of the week.

When, on the other hand, English or American critics attempt to review a political novel in political terms, they very frequently ignore the fact that it is a novel and review it as if it were a political pamphlet. (I recently heard a left-wing critic remark with satisfaction that we were one-third of the way to 1984, and nothing that Orwell prophesied had come true.) In my case many critics have sought, as you have done, to fit my novel into the ideological or party-political alignments of to-day, using the tedious, if perhaps convenient, jargon of "Left" and "Right." But a political novel is not a statement of opinion. I shall make such a statement in this letter to you: I did not make it in my novel, which you describe as "fired from the right and a very long way to the right at that," and again as "the voice of the old, hopeless, self-loving right." What I was doing was to handle imaginatively two trends (two among many) which I thought to perceive in English political and social life to-day.

ONE OF THESE IS THE GROWTH of public immorality. By this I do not mean simply, or even primarily, sexual immorality (*i.e.*, the negation of love in favour of promiscuity and ultimately of prostitution) but since I was writing a novel, sexual symbols were the easiest to hand, the most direct, and, I believed, the most immediately convincing. Behind these symbols are the facts of increasing gangsterism and police brutality; of income-tax evasion being regarded as clever, of commercial crookedness, and of a self-satisfied, dreary materialism on the part of the middle-classes; of bloody-mindedness within the unions, sending-to-coventry, colour bars, refusal to work alongside foreigners; even in sport a whining habit of crying unfair whenever the favoured teams lose.

And behind all this again—and here I am reaching the crux of what I was trying to say—a general, cynical apathy towards what is going on which is in some ways ominously reminiscent of the atmosphere prevalent in pre-Hitler Germany. You may disagree with my diagnosis; but if it is "right wing" to object to, and on occasion to be frightened by, racial discrimination, police brutality, the commercialisation of sex, and the materialistic dullness of the middle-classes, then Right and Left mean something different from what they did when we were at Oxford together and you were a budding Tory politician. And I must say that I have always thought that my political adherence, so far as I have any, is to the left.

THE OTHER STRAND IS, OF COURSE, the "neutralism," dislike of America and trust in the Soviets, that is now kicking up its heels among the unilateralists. You say: "the novel is based on the premise that there is something soft and perverted and dishonest and traitorous in the essential idea of liberalism." That such a premise is ridiculous is obvious: that it is mine is news to me indeed. I believe, from their public utterances and votes, that my point of view concerning the very real dangers of unilateralism is shared, and for reasons not so very different from my own, by Gaitskell, John Strachey, and two-thirds of the Parliamentary Labour Party—to mention only a few of those whom you assume that I dismiss and deride. That there are honest pacifists I do not doubt, and perhaps there are honest neutralists too. But the fact that these honest people are given the full, unequivocal and organised support of the Communist *apparatchiks* is surely beyond dispute. And the apparatus, of course, is only interested in furthering the interests of the Soviet Union, not of this country. Would you or I have trusted any political movement which, in the 'thirties, was given the full support of the British Union of Fascists?

YOU REMARK that my novel was serialised in the *Daily Express*, "which fairly accurately demonstrates its politics." So far as I can make out from my occasional reading of that paper, its politics are a curious amalgam of dislikes (for the Americans, the Germans, the United Nations, the British Council and GATT) and, to judge by its gossip column, of admiration for numerous rich people most of whose names are unknown to me. I do know that a steady contributor to its Sunday paper is that indefatigably anti-German nuclear disarmer, A. J. P. Taylor. How does it all fit in? What demonstrates what?

If the Beaverbrook press assumed that my book was an attack on the Labour Party they were as mistaken, my dear Patrick, as are you in your similar assumption. My book was only incidentally about party politics at all, and to this extent: in my opinion the great lack in Europe at present, and the greatest potential bulwark to protect and encourage all that I (and I believe you) most admire in our culture and morality for the future, is sane, sensible, and practical left-wing parties, of the type that Willy Brandt is at present creating in Germany and that Gaitskell and his friends would like to create here, given the chance. When I wrote my novel—which was just before and during the last general election—it was apparent that there were wreckers at work within the Labour Movement, and I thought it likely that in the event of defeat they would move on to attack the Labour Party itself, using the emotional weapon of pacifism, nuclear disarmament, call it what you will. I further thought, and think, that the wrecking of the Labour Party with consequent one-party or tweedledum-tweedledee government here would be a signal victory for the enemies of parliamentary democracy; what is perhaps even more important, it would debar from office the only political forces which, in my opinion, are capable morally and intellectually of understanding the problems of African and Asian poverty and population-increase and of dealing with those problems as they should

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be dealt with. I believed and believe that these wreckers, acting consciously or unconsciously in the interests of a Soviet "solution" to these imminent and vital problems, were and are the worst internal enemies that the left has had to fight since the Labour Party expelled most of its Communists a quarter of a century ago. And I still think that those enemies regard emotional pacifism as their best means of doing the Labour Party to death.

NOTHING THAT HAS HAPPENED in the last two years has caused me to change my views on this. Rather the contrary. At Scarborough, and since, certain opportunists, of the type I portrayed in my novel, decided that there would be more promotion on the anti-nuclear side of the ocean, and moved across. Meanwhile the idea of moral-leadership-through-military-weakness still strikes me as silly and nothing more. It therefore seems to me that the hope of this country being able to deal with the extremely complex and difficult problems that lie ahead is intimately linked with the outcome of the present struggle within the Labour Party. If the wreckers win we shall all suffer, even ultimately the wreckers themselves. If they are sent back to where they belong, that is to say King Street, Fleet Street, their cathedral chapters, trade union offices and university colleges, I believe and hope that we may yet see a Labour government in office before the end of the decade. If that is the voice of the "old, hopeless, self-loving right," so be it.

Yours ever,
C.

P.S. Historical parallels are two-edged affairs. I have spoken of the Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament being a threat to parliamentary government, and indeed that is, in a way, the theme of my novel. I would point out to you that when, in this past century, parliamentary democracy has been destroyed in great European nation-states this has usually been done by, and in the interests of, a movement that claims to be above the political parties and to speak for the nation as a whole: Bonapartism in 1851, Bolshevism in 1917, Fascism in 1922, Nazism in 1933, even Gaullism in 1958. I would point out further that these are precisely the claims that the nuclear disarmers are repeatedly making for themselves: they are simultaneously above party and yet would wreck the Labour Party to achieve their ends. They are, in fact, a *Bewegung*.

That they are a purely negative *Bewegung*, even more devoid of constructive or falsely constructive ideas than those others, is neither here nor there. The job of the mass-movements is always to silence the democratic dialogue. Once that has been done, a monologue always follows the transitory cacophony. The fact that the C.N.D. has at present no overt and positive political leaders only means that, if it were to succeed, surprising and perhaps unexpected faces would be addressing the mass meetings. What they would have to say is not hard to guess, were the C.N.D. to be logically successful and destroy both our political parties. Partial success, of course, merely means uninhibited Tory voices for a very long time. Is that what you want?

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Mourning Becomes O'Neill

By David Daiches

WHEN James O'Neill, the Irish-American actor who had acquired wealth and fame playing the Count of Monte Cristo year after year all over the United States, first read some of the early plays written by his son Eugene, he exclaimed: "My God! Where did you get such thoughts?" He got them, his biographer Croswell Bowen tells us,* from his inheritance as a "black Irishman" suffering from a hereditary curse that involved the inability to communicate love. And that is the popular view of Eugene O'Neill, whom it has long been the fashion to regard as a tragic, doomed, suffering character, creating dramas out of his own bitter sense of frustration and inadequacy, his sense of man as inevitably, because he is human, cursed and trapped. "Misbegotten," Mr. Bowen calls him, using his own term—though he does not point out the irony of applying such an adjective to a man who had been christened Eugene, "well-begotten." Yet this doomed man had an absolutely sparkling career. He won the Pulitzer Prize with *Beyond the Horizon* in 1920 when he was barely 32, and he won it again in 1921 with *Anna Christie*, a third time with *Strange Interlude* in 1928, and a fourth time (posthumously) with *Long Day's Journey into Night* in 1956. He won the Nobel Prize at the age of 48, and long before that he was acclaimed both in America and in Europe as one of the greatest of living dramatists, the founder of a new American drama. His life, externally at least, was a blazing success story. He went after what he wanted, whether it was an experience, a woman, or a skill, and he obtained it.

He should have been a "golden boy." Instead, he seems to have led a life of selfish self-torture, quarrelling with and repudiating nearly everybody who had any emotional claims on him, always afraid to go to the opening nights of his own plays. His only reaction to the suicide of his brilliant son, Eugene jr., was to remark that now that he was dead, *Long Day's Journey into Night* could be published. Eugene jr. was the son of his first wife, whom he had married on impulse as a youngster before going off to Central America to look for adventure and fortune. The birth took place in his absence; on his return to New York he regarded the marriage as over and finished with, and never saw his first wife again. His second marriage, to Agnes Burton in 1918, lasted for little more than nine years, ending with his quietly walking out on a devoted wife and two children to go off to Europe with Carlotta Monterey. His subsequent cold cruelty to Agnes and his stony repudiation of his hero-worshipping son by her makes disturbing reading in Mr. Bowen's biography. And the interludes of seafaring and tavern-haunting, his periods of hibernation at "Jimmy the Priest's," the waterfront saloon at Fulton Street and the North River which provided both the scene and the characters for *The Iceman Cometh*, or his more casual binges undertaken apparently in order to avoid responsibility—this does not add up to the conventional picture of the artist's bohemia; there is nothing Left Bank or Greenwich Village about it really; it seems all to derive rather from an endeavour to escape human commitment. Yet as a playwright he is, in Wordsworth's phrase describing the poet, "a man speaking to men," and compassion provides the emotional base of some of his best plays. What, we may well ask, went on here?

IT IS ALL in *Long Day's Journey into Night*—the drunken brother, the drug-taking mother, the actor father talking of his early days of hardship and struggle and reproaching himself for having achieved financial success by the easy method of perennially acting Monte Cristo; the mother feels she has married beneath her, the father grudges the money to send his tubercular younger son to a private sanatorium (O'Neill spent four months in 1912–13 at Gaylord Farm Sanatorium, Wallingford, Connecti-

* *The Curse of the Misbegotten*. By CROSWELL BOWEN, with the assistance of SHANE O'NEILL. Rupert Hart-Davis, 25s.

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cut); each character expends most of his energies in reproaching, taunting, and accusing the others. O'Neill finished writing this play in the early months of 1941, when he was in ill-health and the nervous trembling of hands that afflicted him so noticeably in his later years was growing worse. His wife Carlotta recalls his coming weeping out of his study. "His eyes would be all red and he looked ten years older than when he went into his study in the morning." She typed the play, and "wept most of the time." O'Neill inscribed the manuscript of the play to Carlotta on their twelfth wedding anniversary. "I give you the original script of this play of old sorrow, written in tears and blood," he wrote.

Did ever any playwright obey so literally the precept, "Look in thy heart and write?" Yes, perhaps one other did—Strindberg; and there is much in O'Neill that reminds us of Strindberg. He read him for the first time at Gaylord Farm Sanatorium and later testified to the fact that this changed his whole life.

> It was reading his plays [he told Hamilton Basso] that above all gave me the vision of what modern drama could be and first inspired me with the urge to write for the theatre myself. The influence of Strindberg runs clearly through more than a few of my plays and is plain for everyone to see.

And in his letter to the Nobel Prize committee thanking them for awarding him the prize, O'Neill referred to "the debt my work owes to that greatest genius of all modern dramatists, your August Strindberg." Strindberg was a man who constructed his most characteristic plays out of his private nightmares; the positively horrifying power of *The Father* derives from the element of personal obsessiveness in it. Yet in O'Neill the gloom is not inspissated but dissipated; it is spread out and iterated over long sequences of acts and even of plays. The personal element in *Long Day's Journey* or *The Iceman Cometh* or *A Moon for the Misbegotten* does not sharpen the action to the point of hysteria, as it often does in Strindberg, but provides the sustaining atmosphere of doom which O'Neill can keep going pretty well indefinitely: we often have the feeling that he finishes his plays not because the inevitable crisis has been arrived at but because someone has said, "My God, isn't it time to bring this to an end?"

MAN DOES NOT DISCOVER that he is trapped by the consequences of his actions; he acts the way he does because of a prior sense that he is trapped; in many of O'Neill's tragedies, we might say, the doom precedes the fate. It is true that O'Neill's mother did take drugs (though not, we gather from Mr. Bowen's book, as seriously as O'Neill used to make out), that his elder brother Jamie was a drunkard, that his father was not always happy about his too-easy success. But all this becomes the doom of the misbegotten because O'Neill had an *a priori* feeling that it had to be; to be aware of the truth about life was to sniff the doom, pervasively, continuously. Strindberg found his emotional life to be a nightmare and his plays register the nightmare scream; O'Neill made his own past into nightmare—and a nightmare illustrative of human fate—by the way he looked back at it.

Occasionally, by a special effort of the will, he allowed himself to dream a might-have-been past and so produced a play full of a comic tenderness. This is what happened in *Ah, Wilderness*,* which O'Neill himself described as "a sort of wishing out loud. That's the way I would have *liked* my boyhood to have been." Elsewhere O'Neill described the play as "a dream walking" and "a comedy of recollection." Even here there is a little inset tragedy, the story of the ne'er-do-well drunkard Sid Davis and Lily Miller, the school-teacher who loves him but won't marry him, but this is subsumed in the general dreamy-happy atmosphere which determines the shape of the play and controls the conclusion. The play is essentially a family play, and the sense of the reality of family relationships predominates, so that the adolescent hero's rebellious breaking out into "vice" when he thinks his girl-friend has repudiated him and his subsequent return to her gentle young affection is interpreted by the indulgent and loving eyes of his parents, with whose middle-aged acceptance of life and love and change the play quietly closes. This is a totally different reading of the facts of family life from that which we find in *Long Day's Journey*; the facts themselves are not radically different, but they are looked at here through the eyes of dreamy wish-fulfilment rather than those of determined doom. Yet to say that is not to say that it is less real: dreams can be at least as real as nightmares.

OF THE OTHER TWO PLAYS in the new Penguin volume, *All God's Chillun* is a characteristic O'Neill doom play, strengthened but not at all determined by its centering on a marriage between white and negro with the inevitable racial and social tensions. It is typical of O'Neill that there is no suggestion in this play of propaganda for better race relations or greater tolerance of mixed marriages; the race situation is

* Now available, together with *The Hairy Ape* and *All God's Chillun Got Wings*, in a Penguin; 3s. 6d.

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presented as a symbol of human doom, not as an example of social injustice.

Similarly, *The Hairy Ape* is not a play about the bad working conditions of ship's stokers and the social injustice suffered by workers of this kind at the hands of the rich (though some early critics took it to be such a play): it is a play about the impossibility of "belonging." Like so many of O'Neill's plays, it is based on a personal experience: he knew a stoker called Driscoll, strong, proud, and hard-working, who jumped overboard in mid-ocean. The only explanation that O'Neill could find for this strong man's suddenly giving up was the explanation he provides for Hank's behaviour in *The Hairy Ape*—he had lost his sense of belonging. In *All God's Chillun* the married couple both belong to each other and feel that they belong to utterly different worlds. "The events," comments Mr. Bowen, "tend to tax the credulity of American audiences, who find the play melodramatic and over-written." The Negro situation in America isn't as bad as that, he implies.

But surely this is irrelevant. In ancient Thebes people did not go about murdering their fathers and marrying their mothers, but this is not relevant to a consideration of *Oedipus Rex*. O'Neill was not writing about the Negro situation; he was writing about the fact that one partner in a marriage can be driven to madness by an obsessive sense of the other partner's radical difference; he was writing about the tragic disparity between the different kinds of love two people can have for each other—a favourite theme in his plays. For D. H. Lawrence recognition of the true *otherness* of the other partner in love is the supreme revelation, the final mystical consummation of love. For O'Neill such a recognition is the final awareness of the hopelessness of human relations. We are trapped by our own identities, and families exist in order to prove to us that we are trapped. Only in *Ah, Wilderness!* does the family provide a context for identities rather than a machine to force each into its own private hell.

WHOM do we love when we think we love another? And what is the real self underlying the self we think we love?

O'Neill deals with these questions many times in his plays, most directly in *The Great God Brown*.* This play, with its not altogether satisfactory use of masks to indicate differences between a man's public face and his real self (at times there are suggestions of *The Picture of Dorian Gray*), sets on the one side the recurring and characteristically O'Neillian emotion of yearning, associated with the heroine Margaret, and on the other the two men, with their static public and shifting private selves, with whom she is emotionally involved. One of the men, Margaret's husband, dies, and the other, by wearing his mask, persuades Margaret that he is her husband, of whose death she is unaware; by acting out the part of the ideal husband Margaret had thought her lover to be when she married him he makes her brilliantly happy, at the cost of destroying himself. And when he in turn dies, Margaret remains happy, keeping and adoring the mask he had worn, addressing it at the end:

> "My lover! My husband! My boy! You can never die till my heart dies! You will live for ever! . . . I feel you stirring in your sleep, for ever under my heart."

Whom do we love when we think we love another? Ourselves. And what is the real self underlying the self we think we love? Another agonised soul trying to love a projection of itself. Is that the clue to O'Neill's failure as a person, in spite of success at all obvious levels? It is certainly the theme of much that he wrote.

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Of course, O'Neill wrote other kinds of plays too. *The Fountain* is a romantic-symbolist play about love and adventure and the conflict between idealism and opportunism among the Spanish conquistadores in the New World in the early 16th century. It is an odd mixture of *Cyrano de Bergerac* and James Elroy Flecker; O'Neill is here moving in an emotional world he could only imagine from the outside, and the result is pretentious pseudo-poetic dialogue and action that lacks all true realisation. *Before Breakfast* is a short Strindbergian piece (it is reminiscent of Strindberg's *The Stronger*) where a nagging wife drives her silent husband to suicide. *Lazarus Laughed* is one of O'Neill's most abject failures, an attempt to present expressionistically the view that by living wholly in the present we can free ourselves from the anguish of retrospect and anticipation: Lazarus, risen from the grave, goes about laughing and making others laugh in an endeavour to assert a mindless primacy of the present. He is, of course, O'Neill's anti-type; but to escape a sense of doom by an imbecile pragmatic optimism is not only both dramatically and philosophically ridiculous but it also runs flatly against O'Neill's profoundest convictions and feelings. It is interesting that O'Neill should have tried to escape from himself through this kind of factitious symbolic optimism, but not at all surprising that such a feeble attempt at escape should make a bad play. *The Dreamy Kid* is a short one-act play about a young Negro boy staying with his dying grandmother though he knows that this will mean his capture by the police who are after him for murder; it is again about love as a projection of ourselves, and the point is made with a fine dramatic sharpness in dialogue and action that satisfy both by the local texture (which gives an air of reality specifically and fully apprehended) and by the movement towards the inevitable doom. *Dynamo* is another play about the impossibility of love and of belonging, in a context of machine-worship which suggests both Karel Capek and Ernst Toller. But O'Neill is not writing about the distortions in human relations produced by the machine; the machine is just a way of doing it, like the race question in *All God's Chillun*; the hero, haunted by his dead mother, who sacrifices his girl and himself to the dynamo, is a man caught in the familiar family trap by his own unsatisfiable emotional needs.

A more revealing O'Neill play is *Beyond the Horizon*.* Two farm boys, one active, the other a dreamer, love the same girl. The girl thinks she loves the dreamer and

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marries him, so that the other, who ought to have stayed to run the farm, goes out into the world. The dreamer cannot run the farm properly, and it goes to ruin, and as it does so the girl realises (or thinks she realises) that she had loved the active one after all. When the active brother returns, having made and lost a fortune, he finds his brother dying of tuberculosis. He learns, too, that the girl had told her husband that she had all along loved himself (the brother), and he responds with anger, for he had long since lost any feeling for the girl and he loves his brother. In the end the dreamer, who had always yearned to go to far places and discover new things, crawls out of bed to die with his eyes fixed beyond the horizon.

Here again we get the yearning, the misdirection of love, the inability to communicate dreams, and the family providing the theatre within which an inevitable doom works itself out. As so often in O'Neill, we feel that the play is drawn out to enable the author to savour the doom, and it would be better dramatically if it were tightened up. He enjoyed the sense of process which drove him in the end to see (as some of the Greek dramatists did) the sequence of plays rather than the individual play as the unit: *Mourning becomes Electra* is a trilogy modelled on the Oresteia and his most elaborate presentation of the family as the custodian of a doom that conditions rather than emerges from the action.

But Aeschylus was concerned with the nature of justice; O'Neill was concerned only with the sadness of the doom. O'Neill's tragedies are a form of public brooding, neither a ritual of redemption nor a movement towards resolution. In the last analysis, this limits his greatness. Powerful and striking dramatist as he is, he is not one of the world's greatest; the greatest tragedy does more than brood or exhibit the results of brooding.

Marco millions is a mildly amusing and uncharacteristic play showing Marco Polo as at bottom a typical American businessman, though there are overtones even here of the theme of misdirected love and the relation between the true self and the mask. The rather obvious satire shows nothing of O'Neill's real strength, and the play as a whole is something of a sport in the O'Neill garden. *Gold*, a play about the corruption and self-delusion of a captain of a whaler by the prospect of buried treasure, seeks conventional melodramatic means of projecting a tragic theme that would have come across more powerfully if O'Neill had used one of his more characteristic family patterns. For with him it is always the family that reveals all. It is the family that condemns people to torture each other, that reveals the distortions of love, that shows the impossibility of true communication, that determines the doom. And when he wants the doom reversed, he has to go (as in *Ah, Wilderness!*) to the family to reverse it. At the very end he threw all his cards down on the table and exposed in *Long Day's Journey into Night* the family source of all his deepest dramatic imaginings.

After such knowledge, what forgiveness? In a world of doomed yearnings there was one way to freedom—to give up yearning, to abandon hope. The bar is a symbol of freedom; the characters in *The Iceman Cometh* have given up, have sunk to the bottom, and their patter about starting afresh to-morrow kids nobody, least of all themselves. This is the great difference between Ibsen's *The Wild Duck* and O'Neill's play. Both, on the surface, are on the same theme: the necessity of saving illusion, the horrible harm wrought by the idealist who strips away the illusion and discloses the reality. This is Ibsen's theme; it is not really O'Neill's. The iceman, himself a fugitive from the intolerable claims of idealistic love, is no Gregers Werle presenting the "claim of the ideal." It is the iceman who represents self-kidding hope, which destroys; the characters in the bar are restored to a tolerable existence again only when they revert to their confident hopelessness.

The family represents life, with its necessity for human relationships and at the same time its exposure of human relationships as either impossible or destructive. The family is the arena of strife, of mutually conflicting passions, of torturing and self-tortured selves, of people driven to assume and driven to strip off masks. The bar represents escape from all that, escape into a community which is not a community, where every man's relationship is only to the bottle and not to his neighbour, where every human aspiration (and so every human frustration) is given up.

"Call no man happy until he has reached the end of his life," sing the Chorus at the end of *Oedipus Rex*. Call no man happy until he has given up hope, O'Neill would have said. At the end of *Beyond the Horizon* the heroine sinks "into that spent calm beyond the further troubling of any hope." That region is Jimmy the Priest's, where O'Neill used to go to recover from the exhaustions of hoping and wanting. It is a curious reversal of the story of Pandora's box. There it was Hope, packed in the bottom of the box of woes, that enabled man to bear them. In O'Neill's world life is tolerable only when hope has been abandoned. It is really too difficult to be fully human: this perhaps is the most consistent theme of O'Neill's plays.

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Looking Backward

By Dwight Macdonald

TWO YEARS ago Mr. Raymond Williams published *Culture and Society, 1780–1950*, a survey which was interesting and valuable as long as it was specific, which it was most of the time, but whose concluding chapter aroused some doubts as to the author's competence as a theoretician. Now he has put out a sequel* in which theory, unhappily, is dominant. I found Part One, which deals with such vague topics as "The Creative Mind" and "Individuals and Societies," impenetrable; it may have something to do with the rest, but since I couldn't keep my mind on it, I'm not sure. It is followed by a slightly longer Part Two (167 pages *v.* 122) which deals with such concrete topics as "The Growth of the Reading Public" and "The Social History of English Writers" and contains much information and many fresh and valuable observations. Part Three (62 pages) is entitled "Britain in the 1960s;" it is more readable than Part One but no more satisfactory as an attempt at general thinking.

In *The Long Revolution*, Mr. Williams examines the incursion of the masses into the cultural scene in the last two centuries and finds it good; in fact, he argues that the best hope for culture in the future will be to democratise it still further. I think the opposite—that our aim should be to restore the cultural distinctions that have become increasingly blurred since the industrial revolution, and that out of such attempts to do this as the 1890–1930 avant-garde movement of Joyce-Eliot-Picasso-Stravinsky has come whatever is alive in our culture to-day. My position is, sociologically, as "reactionary" as his is "progressive." Like Marx, he sees history as an escalator. I should love to agree with him; all my conditioned reflexes are for Progress; but reality keeps creeping in. If history is in fact an escalator, which I doubt, then I think the interests of culture, and of human values generally, demand that we run back the wrong way—or, better, step off it. And I see Mr. Williams' point of view, for all its Progressivism, as a nostalgic one. I think he is living in the past, before 1914, when a belief in simple democracy was still intellectuallly possible.

Thus I agree wholeheartedly, and perhaps softheadedly, with his political values, which are those of Guild Socialism, an admirable and obsolete British doctrine which resembled the anarchism of Kropotkin: a vision of a communal style of life in which groups of producers —Soviets, really, before Lenin and Stalin got to work—freely co-operate without any coercive central authority. Thus both classless collectivism and individual freedom would be achieved. It is a noble and imaginative concept, more likely to produce a decent society than the Marxian formula of using State power as the instrument of social change, a formula as dangerous as it has been successful, leading to the horrors of totalitarianism or the sapless compromise of the Weimar Republic and the British Labour Party. The difference is that Mr. Williams thinks this vision is the logical result of the democratisation and industrialisation of the last two centuries and that it can be realised without catastrophe or revolution if the majority had the will and the consciousness (commodities with which he is ready to supply them in abundance), while I see Marxian Statism as the programme which best meets the needs of mass industry. To deflect the course of history towards the Guild-Socialist-anarchist vision will require a severe break with the kind of society we now have, that is, will require catastrophe and revolution, in that order.

WHY DOESN'T Mr. Williams see this? I think because he is a preacher rather than a thinker, one more interested in exhorting than in analysing. He conceals this hortatory bias—perhaps even from himself—by constant allusions to the complex nature of reality. He is of the "There-is-no-simple-answer" school of thought, or rather of rhetoric. True, there *is* no simple answer. But as the artist must simplify in order to produce a work that will be a coherent statement and not merely a reflection of the chaos of reality, so the thinker must generalise. Marx and Freud were good at it, for all the complexity and subtlety of their thought, which is why their ideas have proved effective. I don't think Mr. Williams' ideas are effective. In fact I don't think they are ideas at all. They are, rather, prejudices—prejudices on the right side, generous and sincere and democratic prejudices, but still *idées reçues*, unexamined assumptions.

* *The Long Revolution*. Chatto and Windus, 30s.

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He isn't good at generalising and this is shown by his appalling prose style—for one cannot conceive of an idea apart from the words in which it is expressed; at least I can't. Mr. Williams' prose is that of a propagandist; it is fuzzy on principle, swathed in circumlocutions, emitting multi-syllabic words as the cuttlefish does clouds of ink, and for very much the same purpose. A good style comes to grips with things as soon as possible, but Mr. Williams' style puts the maximum distance between the reader and the subject. He is addicted to such opening sentences as,

> The extension of culture has to be considered within the real social context of our economic and political life.

Which is shortly followed by:

> In a rapidly changing and therefore confused society, in which cultural forms will in any case change but in which little is done by way of education to deepen and refine the capacity for significant response, the problems that confront us are inevitably difficult.

This sort of writing is like marking time in military drill—but the company never seems to get on the march. The style is an end in itself, a magical device for charming away, by heart-warming liblab formulations, the threatening reality. Mr. Williams is fond of that great liblab word, "challenge" (he also likes "creative") and is always talking about meeting challenges. I suspect this is because he so rarely does meet them in fact.

The sermon is his literary form. In true preacher fashion, he is forever contrasting the dismal present with the bright future which can easily come into being if only we will hearken, and in true preacher fashion he never seems to suspect that the present, which is merely the tiny tip of the long thick tail of the past, may be the product of historical forces which will continue to affect the future. He constantly insists on the gloom of the present and as constantly extrapolates from it a misty Utopia, throwing across the horrible gulf a gossamer bridge of good intentions. If this sounds like *The Poverty of Philosophy*, so be it; writers like Mr. Williams rouse the old Marx in one.

The systole and diastole of his way of thinking—more accurately, of feeling—may be anatomised on pages 301–302. He begins by deploring "the visible decline of the labour movement," of which "large sections" have gone over to "ways of thinking which they still formally oppose." This indictment he spells out:

> The main challenge to capitalism was socialism, but this has almost wholly lost any contemporary meaning, and it is not surprising that many people now see in the Labour Party merely an alternative power-group, and in the trade-union movement merely a set of men playing the market in very much the terms of the employers they oppose.

Whether the author is one of those "many people" is not clear, but the implication is that this is at least a tenable viewpoint. Now comes the diastole:

> I remember that I surprised many people, in *Culture and Society*, by claiming that the institutions of the labour movement... were a great creative achievement of the working people and also *the right basis for the whole organisation of any good society of the future*. [My italics—D. M.] Am I now withdrawing this claim? The point is, as I see it, that my claim rested on the new social patterns these institutions offered... this steady offering of ways of living that could be extended to the whole society... collective democratic institutions... substitution of co-operative equality for competition....

Granted the potentialities of the labour movement for these "new social patterns," but if potentialities were horses then preachers might ride. First, one could make the same argument—and it is still made in ideologically backward countries like the United States—for Adam Smith's free-market capitalism, which also offered "new social patterns" which might have resulted in another kind of anarchic Utopia had it not been for the actual capitalists, who played the same role that the actual British trade union leaders have played in sabotaging Mr. Williams' Utopia. And second, the task is not to wake us up by exhortation—we are all too painfully awake already—but to explain why these potentialities in the labour movement have not been realised, why the whole massive drift has been for five or six generations—in Germany, in England, in the United States—away from the communal-democratic pattern that Mr. Williams rightly advocates. To this task he has not addressed himself, perhaps because he takes it for granted—as we did in the Trotskyist movement in the 'thirties—that the workers are okay, it's just those treacherous (or shortsighted, or corrupt) leaders. We never wondered why such splendid fellows invariably followed such unsplendid leaders, for we were, as I think Mr. Williams is, suckers for what Alfred Braunthal once described as "the mystic cult of The Masses, who always feel the right way and always act the wrong way."

But, as Mr. Williams will be the first to insist, far from believing in the mystic cult of the masses, he rejects the whole concept, feeling about this six-letter word as Mr. Griffith-Jones

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did about the four-letter words in *Lady Chatterley's Lover*. In the last chapter of *Culture and Society*, he has a lot to say about this word, and he repeats the essence in Part Three of *The Long Revolution*. It evidently makes him uneasy, as shorter words did Mr. Griffith-Jones. Ignoring the long use of "the masses" as a favourable term in Marxist polemics—is this perhaps a bit of Freudian socio-suppression?—he takes it as a term of abuse used by culture-snobs as a synonym for "the mob" and as a condescending formulation which press lords and movie tycoons use to describe their audiences: "We give the masses what they want."

Mr. Williams points out that no one thinks of himself as part of "the masses," which is true, but he then goes too far: "Masses are other people. There are in fact no masses; there are only ways of seeing people as masses." But of course the fact that one is not conscious of being such-and-such does not mean that one is not such-and-such; a leopard is a leopard whether he thinks he is or not, and Hitler was a mass-man whether he thought he was Siegfried or Napoleon or just Adolf Schickelgruber. However, Mr. Williams objects to the whole concept of "masses," arguing that it is false (because it implies that human beings are automata) and reactionary (because it is "a way of seeing other people which has . . . been capitalised for the purpose of political or cultural exploitation"). But, while I agree that human beings are not automata, I think they behave like such in certain situations which have been brought about by our mass-industrial society, as when they are polarised by parties like the Nazi or the Communist ones or by cultural media like American television or the big British daily newspapers. Why it is reactionary to recognise this obvious fact of modern life I do not see, especially since Mr. Williams constantly does it himself (though eschewing the actual six-letter word), deploring the flood of "bad art, bad entertainment, bad journalism," noting that "the new institutions [of culture] were not produced by the working people themselves" and denouncing the "cheapjacks" who exploit popular ignorance to make money. The question, it seems to me, is not whether "masses" is a dirty word but whether it is an accurate one.

The difference between our positions, of course, is that Mr. Williams blames it all on the cheapjacks and exploiters, while I see it as a reciprocal process, in which the ignorance and vulgarity of the mass public meshes in an endless cat's-cradle with the same qualities—plus rapacity—in the lords of *kitsch*. The cheapjacks do indeed sell adulterated cultural goods, but the awkward question (shall we say the chal-

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lenge?) is why the masses prefer adulteration to the real thing, why the vast majority of the British people read *News of the World* instead of *The Observer* and go to see *Carry On, Nurse!* instead of *L'Avventura*. Mr. Williams says it is because they are ill-educated and socially disadvantaged. This is part of the answer but far from the whole. The difficulty is that most people, of whatever education or social position, don't care very much about culture. This is not a class matter and is not even unique to our age. Some Renaissance nobles patronised the arts but most of them were more interested in hunting and fighting. Very few of my classmates in Yale '28, a notably un-disadvantaged social group, spent more time than they were forced to in that institution's excellent library—a fifth would be a generous, a tenth a realistic estimate. If between eighty and ninety per cent of the population just don't care about such matters, then standards can be maintained only by thinking in terms of two cultures, a diluted, adulterated one for the majority, rich or poor, and the real thing for the minority that wants it. The middle-brow compromise that is now being evolved in the United States is just the wrong way to attack the problem.

This is an undemocratic proposition and Mr. Williams will have none of it. He thinks that to reverse the trend of mass culture requires only a little goodwill and social discipline. "The ways of controlling such activities [*i.e.*, those of the cheapjack lords of *kitsch*] are well known," he writes. "We lack only the will." But the question is precisely why the will *is* lacking. (It's like hysterical paralysis—the family said, "You just have to make an effort," but Freud said: "You can't make an effort. Strange. Why not?") Also, I deny that the ways of control are well known. Certainly his own proposals arouse little confidence. Thus, for example, he admits that in a sizable area of mass culture—radio, television, newspapers, theatre, and cinema—"simple co-operative ownership is impossible." He proposes, therefore, that "these must be owned by the community in trust for the producers, and an administration set up which is capable of maintaining this trust." But I remember that the factories of Soviet Russia are owned by the community in trust for the producers, and I am not enthralled. *Quis custodiet ipsos custodes?* Who takes care of the caretaker's daughter when the caretaker's busy taking care? I don't at all like the sound of that trustworthy administration, nor am I reassured a few pages later on when it becomes "a public authority" which actors must satisfy as to their "competence" and publishers as to their "responsibility." I've been too often charged with "irresponsibility," especially when I chance to get a new idea. On the whole, I'd rather take my chances in the capitalist jungle.

A FEW WORDS MUST BE SAID, finally, about the extraordinary reception *The Long Revolution* has had from the London critics. The only downright rude review I've seen was in the *Times Literary Supplement*; the reviewer was at once majestically rebuked in the letter columns by assorted dons, who felt he was incompetent, irresponsible, and slightly frivolous; the last charge was made because he admitted he couldn't understand much of Part One, but since I'm in the same boat, I prefer to think it was Mr. Williams' style and not the reviewer's acumen that was defective. All the other notices, even the one in the *Telegraph*, were either respectful or positively admiring. Not since Colin Wilson's *The Outsider* has a big "think book" had such notices. *The Long Revolution* is of course a much better book than *The Outsider*, mainly because of the interesting cultural history in Part Two. But they do have something in common.

There is a kind of book which is almost sure to impress the critics. It must deal with some big central issue, it must take itself very seriously (humour is fatal—Mr. Williams need

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worry about this problem no more than Mr. Wilson had to), and it must have the air of boldly stating some positive solution. James Burnham's *The Managerial Revolution*, now forgotten but in its day widely discussed, was an early example of the species. Others have been *The Lonely Crowd* and *The Organization Man*—titles are important, like packaging. A current American instance is Paul Goodman's *Growing Up Absurd*, which is almost as badly written as Mr. Williams' book and which, except for a perceptive review by Dan Jacobson in *The Spectator*, has been given the usual kid-glove treatment in the London press. I don't mean to imply that all these books are on the same level or even that the *genre* is in itself a bad one; Mr. Goodman has many wise things to say, as did Mr. Riesman and Mr. Whyte in their books. But I think the automatic friendliness of the reviewers has less to do with merit than with the fact that the reviewers, and all of us for that matter, want very much to believe that the books are good. We *need* this kind of book, *someone* must tackle these perplexing and distressing problems, so all credit to *X*, *Y*, or *Z* for a jolly good try.

This psychology emerges with embarrassing clarity in a curious review of *The Long Revolution* by Richard Crossman in *The Guardian*. "I have often pointed out that one malady from which the Labour Party has suffered since 1945 has been its booklessness," he begins. (One might think of more dangerous maladies, but let it pass.) He then goes on to praise Mr. Williams for his intentions—"the first theoretical exposition of this new socialism," that is, the new-old socialism of the L.P. left wing, which is really the primitive pre-1914 doctrine with unilateralist trimmings, as against the old-new Gaitskellian heresies of John Strachey and C. A. R. Crosland. Mr. Crossman is definitely an Old Believer. Yet he is also a shrewd man and throughout the bulk of his review the encomiums for Mr. Williams' ideas barely win out over the criticisms of the ineptness with which they are formulated: "the author whose new thoughts are struggling to emerge through old methods of expression cannot be expected to show the easy elegancies of more traditional writers." (But, as the Bible says, a sensible man doesn't put new wine in old bottles, and the real point is why Mr. Williams has been unable to make any new bottles, why his style is so bureaucratic and academic; perhaps his ideas aren't so new after all.) After two columns of such uneasy rationalisations—at one point he excuses the author's "inconsistencies and failures" on the grounds that he has "burst the thought barrier," though one might think a brain capable of such a feat could have also

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avoided inconsistency—Mr. Crossman concludes with a megaton effort:

> If I have expressed my disappointment with some passages so frankly, it is because *The Long Revolution* is the book I have been waiting for since 1945.... I cannot recommend it to those who like their ideas kept on ice and served up on silver spoons. Reading *The Long Revolution* I had the feeling that I was in at the birth, anxiously watching what was once an embryo now suddenly emerging, messily but triumphantly, as a new-born babe.

Reading Mr. Crossman's review, I had the feeling that ice and silver spoons aren't such bad props for thinking clearly about these matters, and also that metaphors about birth aren't the best way to write criticism. A little desperate. New-born babies are messy, but a good book is triumphant; it is precisely the author's job to clean up the mess before he publishes; and if it can't be cleaned up, then one concludes the thinking is messy and that one is in at the still-birth of just another ideological embryo.

Montherlant

Henry de Montherlant: **Selected Essays.** Edited and with an Introduction by PETER QUENNELL. **The Bachelors.** With an Introduction by PETER QUENNELL. *Weidenfeld & Nicolson*, 21s. and 15s.

THE EXTRACTS from M. de Montherlant's non-fiction work from *La Relève du matin* to the *Carnets* contained in *Selected Essays* serve as an introduction to a new translation of the collected works and are apparently designed to provide the reader with a portrait of the man and the writer. Mr. Quennell's selections vary considerably in interest and there are some serious omissions. The most substantial of them are the accounts of anti-Semitism in the paper called "A Jew-boy Goes to War" and of the author's own doings at the time of Munich in the long extract from *L'Équinoxe de septembre*.

M. de Montherlant, however, is happiest when he is drawing his own portrait. "What have I been?" he asks, echoing Stendhal's celebrated question. His answer is less circumspect than that master's. "An adventurer," he replies. He adds caustically:

> Not a literary adventurer who gets himself photographed in a pullover or sitting on a camel, but a real adventurer who hides the fact that he is one.

"A real adventurer" in this context appears to mean an adventurer in the schoolboy sense. "I have been," he remarks in another place, "an athlete, a soldier, and a bullfighter." He is also a man of contradictions: Catholic and pagan; an aristocrat who finds the people more sympathetic than the aristocracy; a patriot who enjoys belabouring the fatherland; a soldier who detests modern warfare and seems to hanker nostalgically after the more chivalrous encounters of an earlier age; a womaniser who at bottom hates women. "There is in my work," he wrote in one of the epilogues to *Le Maître de Santiago*, "a Christian vein and a 'profane' vein that I nourish alternately or, as I nearly said, simultaneously."

> My attitude towards Catholicism [he remarks in the *Carnets*] has always been like that of the Mediterranean towards its beaches, now caressing and now retreating. Or, like a cat biting and licking at one and the same time.

In another place he declares, violently, that he looks forward to the day when the Sacré Cœur will have become "a museum of Irreligion." He has a poor opinion of the fatherland. Already in 1932 he was saying that "France is falling apart."

We may feel a certain doubt about his claim that he is an adventurer "who hides the fact that he is one," for M. de Montherlant was a pupil of Barrès and Gide. There is a marked strain of exhibitionism in his writing. The three themes which recur most often in his essays are religion, art, and sex, but so far as he is concerned the greatest of these is clearly sex. He is unquenchable on the subject of women because they obviously provide the exhibitionist and the sadist with his best opportunities. "I am not in love with X...." he observes in a characteristic pronouncement, "I am in love with the way I captured her." "The foundation of life," we are told in another passage of the *Carnets*, "is tranquil sexual satisfaction." He glories in being not merely an uncommitted writer, but an uncommitted man. The one thing to be avoided at all costs is being trapped: falling in love, a wife, a family. His aim is what he calls "affectionate copulation." All through the *Carnets* we are continually meeting Don Juan on the threshold of middle age prowling the streets at dawn in search of a young girl: "A battered felt hat, unbrushed shoes, a creased overcoat, yet I am coming back with my live prey. To think that I managed to bring the whole thing off with my shoes unpolished!" It is a limitation in the man and the writer that he should feel flattered at securing "the living prey" in spite of his scruffy appearance, that he should be unable to see the fatuity of this glimpse of the humourless seducer fidgeting with his fly-buttons, chalking up the number of his victims, or possibly reflecting with satisfaction on the score in bed.

It is a curious fact that the more of himself a writer puts into his imaginative work, the more

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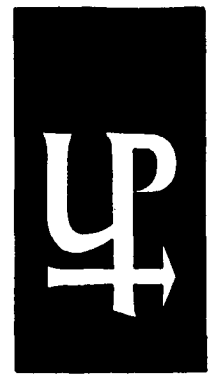
eager he is to assure the reader that his characters are not portraits of the artist. In the *Carnets* M. de Montherlant takes a swipe at the "stupidity" of readers who think that he is Costals. In a prefatory note to *Les Jeunes filles* he is more cautious.

> The character of Costals is at least in part that of a "libertine" or a "bad hat" (as people used to say). It was therefore necessary to give him the traits which became his character. If it is certain that the author has put something of himself into his character, it is nevertheless a fact that he possesses a number of traits which belong to the purely objective world, which were chosen entirely for reasons of art and which cannot be imputed to the person of the novelist.

This warning was repeated in the preface to *Pitié pour les femmes*, but there was an odd addition. He pointed out that the central character in *La Rose de Sable* was a man endowed with the highest moral qualities—patriotism, charity, horror of violence, passion for justice and suffering in the face of injustice—and wondered whether readers would show the same eagerness to impute Auligny's good qualities to his creator as they had been to impute Costals' bad qualities to him.

THE EXTENT TO WHICH an imaginative writer puts himself into his work is a question which has occupied us more and more with the popularity of Freudian criticism. Obviously, in one way or another, an author must put himself into his books. His life and personality are the sources of his imaginative work and its appeal depends on the richness of his sources. It is dangerous to generalise, but we can perhaps say that while the great writer tends to identify himself partially with a number of different characters, to project something of himself into them, or to use some of them as his spokesmen, the lesser writer tends to produce something which is plainly "autobiographical" or something from which the author is wholly excluded. *Les Jeunes filles* belongs to the autobiographical group; *The Bachelors* to those works from which the author is absent, and the only fragments of *La Rose de Sable* so far published come somewhere between the two.

Les Jeunes filles seems to me to be an essay in self-dramatisation rather than a novel. The central character is evidently a glorified projection of his creator: the famous novelist pursued by a pack of foolish and importunate women, indulging alternately in "affectionate copulation" and downright cruelty; a mixture of sadist and sentimentalist; the humourless, slightly fatuous seducer of the *Carnets* blown up to rather more than life-size. M. de Montherlant



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METHUEN

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apparently does not accept the view that, though he was drawing on people whom he had known in *The Bachelors*, he himself is not to be found in it. He has said that a novelist is bound to project into his characters something of the *"côté pauvre type"* which is present in all of us. I cannot share Mr. Quennell's enthusiasm for this novel; I cannot interest myself in M. de Montherlant's two "poor fish." The novel seems to me to belong to the bad tradition inaugurated by *Bouvard et Pécuchet*, but to be without those moments of nightmare horror which redeem Flaubert's work and which later writers like Alfred Jarry tried, without success, to recapture or reproduce. In spite of Montherlant's praise for the high moral qualities of the central character in *La Rose de Sable*, Auligny seems to me to be another "poor fish" whose rather messy affair with the Arab girl is the only point of contact with the novelist. For in this work the author appears surely in M. de Guiscart, that vastly entertaining piece of self-caricature.

The plays are a different matter. Montherlant's practice, in the best of them, of choosing some at least of his characters from history acts as a corrective to the excessively autobiographical approach of the novels. He does not put himself into Ferrante or Alvaro or Soeur Angélique; he does project into them a good many of the traits that we find in the self-portraits in *Selected Essays*. What gives them their undeniable power is the way in which he manages to project his own contradictions, and primarily the conflict between Catholic and pagan, or Catholic and stoic, in works like *La Reine morte*, *Le Maître de Santiago*, and *Port-Royal*. The sadistic streak in Ferrante, which gives *La Reine morte* its shattering ending, the overweening pride, the destructive asceticism, or what he elects to call "Roman puritanism," of *Santiago* and *Port-Royal* are undoubtedly a reflection of something in the man. Nor are the words that he uses of Alvaro in the epilogue to *Santiago* entirely inapplicable to himself.

> I have not made Alvaro a model Christian, and there are times when he is a caricature of a Christian: almost a Pharisee. He remains inside Christianity. . . . What is his love of God if not love of his own idea of himself? . . . His God is far more void than love.

For Alvaro belongs like his creator to what Montherlant calls *la race des durs*.

Montherlant is not well known in England, but he is regarded in his own country as one of the leading writers of the day. It is right that he should be. He is a writer of unmistakable talent, but it is not altogether easy to decide on the nature of his achievement. He seems to me to be a dramatist who writes novels, rather than a novelist turned dramatist like François Mauriac. His novels, in so far as they are novels, are examples of what I once called the man-of-letters-novel: the sort of novels which are produced by the intelligent, well-trained man of letters rather than a born novelist. His most impressive achievement must remain *La Reine morte*, but it does not escape the failing which is inherent in all his work: the absence of some positive principle which would enable him to harmonise his own contradictions and to produce a unified *œuvre* instead of a series of brilliant *tours de force*.

Martin Turnell

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HEINEMANN

Secret Decisions

Science and Government. By C. P. Snow. *Oxford*, 9s. 6d.

Suddenly, and very rapidly, the contours of a new critique of contemporary capitalism are emerging. In *The Affluent Society* Kenneth Galbraith exposed for the first time the unbalance inherent in any fully-employed free economy—its tendency to develop, under a

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chronic inflation, a horrid combination of private affluence and public squalor. He painted an unforgettable picture of consumers loaded with unnecessary and largely unwanted consumer goods, while the community is starved of essential public services. Two years after *The Affluent Society* was published, Raymond Williams broke new and important ground with *The Long Revolution*. Galbraith has come to his synoptic view of capitalism from a study of economics. Williams, starting from English literature, sees the problem as one of working-class alienation from modern culture and has tried to develop a new organic study of society in which culture is no longer regarded as a private leisure activity, of no concern to a democratic community.

Now, in *Science and Government*, which consists of three brilliant lectures delivered at Harvard, Sir Charles Snow has shown us what the third prong of this triple attack must be. To Galbraith's new analysis of affluence and Williams' new analysis of culture he adds a new analysis of decision-making in the 20th-century State. In the very first paragraph of his lecture Snow states the problem with a characteristic combination of nonchalance and precision.

> One of the most bizarre features of any advanced industrial society in our time is that the cardinal choices have to be made by a handful of men: in secret: and, at least in legal form, by men who cannot have a first-hand knowledge of what those choices depend upon or what their results may be.

And a little later he adds:

> I know that we can draw diagrams of political responsibility which are able to make us feel that everything can be reconciled with the principles of parliamentary government. But if we do, we shall not even begin to understand what is really happening. We shall fool ourselves, as we do too often, with that particular brand of complacency, of lack of gravity, which is one of the liabilities of the West, growing upon us perhaps as we become more affluent. The first thing, it seems to me, is to try to understand what really happens. We must learn to think without making use of the patterns or models taken for granted by most of the text books. It is harder than it sounds.

VERY WISELY, Snow has chosen to discuss this central problem of political power not in the abstract but in terms of two top-secret controversies of which he himself had personal experience, and in which a dramatic conflict of personalities was staged. The first of them produced, in 1934, the decision to give top priority to the development of radar, as a direct consequence of which it became possible to win the Battle of Britain. The second, which took place in the spring of 1942, ended with a victory for those determined to give top priority to an expanded bomber offensive; as a direct result of this decision the war was prolonged for six months, possibly for a year. In the first episode the crucial debate took place among a tiny group of scientists, with Tizard and Blackett the chief supporters of radar and Lindemann a lone obstructive voice. By 1942 the roles had been reversed. Lindemann had become Churchill's scientific panjandrum and Tizard and Blackett were voices in the wilderness. In March of that year the Prime Minister asked the Air Staff how Britain could best help the Russians stem the expected German summer offensive. It was Lindemann who urged them to prepare a paper claiming that, if top priority were given to bomber production and training, 50 per cent of the German working class could be "de-housed" by area bombing. Tizard, after studying the statistics, said the estimate was five times too high. Blackett's conclusion was that it was six times too high. When the strategic bombing survey was made after the war, it was found that both had been in error. In fact, it was ten times too high.

Reading this classic example of "closed politics," I found that I could add something to it.

At the time of the Tizard-Lindemann controversy I was Director of Political Warfare against the Enemy and a member of P.W.E., a special secret department attached to the Foreign Office. Ritchie Calder was Director of Plans and Sir Robert Bruce Lockhart our common boss. In a minor role we too were involved, since our department was asked to give its comments on the Lindemann paper. It was, of course, for the scientists to assess the physical destructiveness of the proposed bomber offensive. But what about its effect on German morale? P.W.E. had a large and extremely efficient intelligence section, devoted to the study of the Nazi home front, and one of its tasks was to supply the Joint Intelligence Committee with monthly reports on German morale. The question put to us ran as follows: "Assume the Lindemann offensive could be carried out and 50 per cent de-housing successfully achieved. What would be its effect on the German home front and, in particular, on war production?"

At the time I at least had no idea that Tizard and Blackett were challenging the validity of Lindemann's calculations, and it was quite independently that the scientists and the propagandists chose the same technique for testing his project. *They* decided to measure the

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physical effect on German cities by studying the physical effect of the Nazi raids on Britain. *We* decided to test its effect on morale in just the same way—assuming that German workers would "take it" just as bravely as British workers and react to bombing in much the same way. We therefore collated all the available information about the effects on British morale and British productivity of the most concentrated German raids in 1940 and 1941. The conclusion was unavoidable. Instead of breaking British morale, German terror bombing had greatly strengthened it. Nor had the random bombing of big cities seriously upset war production. Indeed, in certain places, such as Coventry, it had solved an awkward problem by destroying the peacetime plants and so forcing the workers into previously half-empty shadow factories. Of course there were places where bad organisation or poor leadership had permitted a mass exodus or a temporary panic, but the lesson of these local failures had been learnt and the chance of repetition largely removed by a number of common-sense arrangements, including, as I remember it, war damage insurance (this reduced the extent of anxiety at the loss of property); "nationalisation" of the fire services; the integration of as many people as possible into civil defence; and preparations for the immediate provision of lavish rations and cigarettes to any hard-hit town. Even if the R.A.F. achieved a much heavier concentration of bombs than the Nazis, there was no reason to believe that this would break German home morale. Indeed, we foresaw that, since the German authorities would react at least as sensibly as ours, German productivity might actually be increased by terror raids.

"A man with a home has something worth surrendering for," I remember writing. "Dehouse him, and you will stiffen his resistance." When the big R.A.F. fire raid hit Hamburg, Bomber Harris was sure our predictions had been falsified. But, as we had rightly assumed, the German authorities soon discovered how to exploit disaster in order to stimulate the spirit of resistance. I remember reading, a few weeks later, a brilliant report, written by the head of the Nazi fire service, analysing the Hamburg disaster and recommending the measures to prevent it recurring, including compulsory descent to shelters during the raid and compulsory fire-fighting immediately afterwards. In our assessment of the effect of bombing on German home morale, we professional propagandists were proved mainly right and the R.A.F., Lindemann, and Churchill completely wrong. At the time, however, we shared the fate of Tizard and Blackett. We were dubbed defeatists, with the added smear that, as German experts, we were bound to be "soft" about Germans.

THESE RECOLLECTIONS of 1942 inevitably call to mind a more recent and even more disastrous example of "closed politics"—the decision to proceed with the crash programme for making the H-bomb. What happened in those top-secret Washington discussions of 1949–50 has been published with a wealth of detail that no Englishman would ever permit himself. From the half-million words of the "Transcript of the Oppenheimer hearing," one can learn exactly what each of the main participants said and thought and felt; and the atmosphere of this amazing document has strange similarities to that of Whitehall in 1942. Then, Britain had the choice between an unspectacular build-up of its conventional invasion forces or staking everything upon "annihilation from the air" as a substitute for conventional warfare in the field.

In 1949, with the breaking of the American nuclear monopoly, Mr. Truman was faced with a similar dilemma. The policy pressed upon him by the Strategic Air Force was an attempt to regain technological superiority, on the assumption that the H-bomb would be beyond Russian capacities. Against this gamble were ranged George Kennan of the State Department, as well as Oppenheimer and his band of nuclear scientists. They all warned the President against the crash programme and advised him instead to develop atomic tactical weapons in order to strengthen NATO's forces in the field. The President chose the H-bomb and, for the crime of opposing him, Oppenheimer was investigated and pronounced a security risk. Once again victory had gone to what Snow aptly calls "the gadget men."

WHAT LESSONS can we draw from these examples of "closed politics"? Was secrecy the cause of the trouble, and would the mistakes have been avoided if there had been an appeal to outside opinion? Snow points out that such decisions are bound, by their very nature, to be taken in secret; in this respect Western democracy does not differ from Eastern totalitarianism. And he goes on to suggest that this secrecy is not only inevitable but in no way inimical to science.

> In more liberal days, scientists tended to assume, as an optimistic act of faith, as something which ought to be true because it made life sweeter, that science could only flourish in the free air. I wish it were so. I think everyone who has ever witnessed secret science and secret choices wishes it were so. But nearly all the evidence is dead against it. Science needs discussion, yes: it needs the criticism of other scientists: but that can be made to exist, and of course has

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been made to exist, in the most secret projects. Scientists have worked, apparently happily, and certainly effectively, in conditions which would have been thought the negation of science by the great free-minded practitioners. But the secret, the closet, the climate which to earlier scientists would have been morally intolerable, soon becomes easy to tolerate. I even doubt whether, if one could compare the rate of advance in one of the secret sciences with one of those which is still open to the world, there would be any significant difference. It is a pity.

This may sound shocking, but I have little doubt it is right. Indeed, Snow could have carried his argument further and claimed that, if either of these issues *had* been debated in press and Parliament, the scientists would have fared even worse.

If Tizard and Blackett were dubbed defeatists in the secret corridors of Whitehall, how much more intolerant public opinion would have been after a public controversy, with *The Times*, the *Express*, and the *Mirror* all allied against them! This is what actually happened in the H-bomb debate. The treatment of Oppenheimer and his colleagues was bad enough while the controversy was secret. But when the facts began to be revealed, they fanned the McCarthyite fires. Both decisions, in fact, although taken in secret, were actually in accordance with the public mood; and in each case the politician responsible for the disaster acted in the conviction that he was representing democratic common sense against the unreliable theorising of a group of irresponsible intellectuals. Secrecy, we may conclude, will normally improve the chance of a good decision, since a politician, in the privacy of the Cabinet or a Cabinet committee, should be less committed, more open to reason, and readier to weigh the evidence than he can afford to be in public debate. Indeed, we can say that, in our nuclear age, "open decision, openly arrived at" is as phoney a panacea as Woodrow Wilson's "open covenants, openly arrived at" was in 1918.

I HAVE ONLY ONE serious complaint against *Science and Government*. In the second part of his book, where he draws the moral from his wartime narrative, Snow seems to me to shirk one half of the problem he set himself in his opening paragraph. He draws a number of sensible, if rather obvious, conclusions. He rightly warns us against the "gadget man" and the "courtier"—Lindemann was both—and points out the danger of permitting all final recommendations on scientific matters to be made by a single overlord, even if he is properly appointed. Rightly, too, he urges that, if there were more people with scientific training in key Whitehall positions, and more politicians with an inkling of scientific method in the Cabinet,

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the chance that closed politics would issue in correct decisions could be increased. But to leave matters there is to overlook the main weakness of decision-making in a Western democracy. Our self-inflicted defeats have not been confined to occasions when scientific topics or military secrets have been under discussion. To-day the West is losing the cold war, not so much because the *wrong* decisions are taken as because *no* decision is or can be taken on so many issues.

By selecting as his examples top-secret wartime controversies, Snow has unintentionally slurred over the fact that there is no essential difference, so far as decision-making is concerned, between the peacetime problems of allocating our resources correctly and those of war. We in the West only fail to see this because in peacetime our Governments renounce responsibility for making many of the main decisions, leaving them to be determined by the laws of the market and profitability. In wartime our national resources are allocated according to plan; the Government is furnished with the information upon which to make a rational decision and has at its disposal the instruments for enforcing it. In peacetime, overall central planning is jettisoned. Western freedom means to-day that no Western government has either the right or the power to take the decisions necessary for winning the cold war until a hot war has actually begun.

In the 1960s this is the strongest argument for socialism; but many British socialists are unwilling to use it. One reason for their reluctance is the fact that the abandonment of central planning took place under the Labour Government of 1945. Instead of preparing for the transition from wartime controls to a planned socialist economy, the Attlee Cabinet clung to the system of wartime controls and rationing, as though it were a substitute for socialism. When the post-war shortages, which were the sole justification for its retention, began to disappear, they had no idea what to put in its place and were still trying to make up their minds when they were flung from office. Since then, during ten years of Opposition, this cardinal failure of the Attlee Government has been scarcely admitted, far less analysed.

How to ensure that the next Labour Government (1) is provided with the information necessary for taking the right decisions and (2) has at its disposal the socialist instruments for carrying them out? That, surely, is the central question to which socialists in Opposition should be finding a practical and detailed answer. It is because I want that question asked and answered that I welcome Sir Charles' little book with such enthusiasm.

R. H. S. Crossman

THE PRESS

Letter from New York

Arnold Beichman's complaint about the American press [Encounter, March] arouses no quarrel in me. But I find it difficult to engage, because his concerns are not mine. I know him, with respect, as a practising journalist; but his complaints in this case are as reader rather than writer, and his concern is with the newspaper as source of information rather than as work-bench from which a man can come home with some sense of having at once entertained himself and done the smallest possible damage to his conscience.

I should say, first, that I know no American newspaper more than remotely valuable as a source of information. The New York *Times* seems to me remotely valuable. In the case of Mr. Homer Bigart, it has at least one foreign correspondent who pokes around strange corners in search of self-education, adventure, and entertainment and who conveys all these things to his readers. I should buy the *Times* every day on the chance that Mr. Bigart would appear there. It is my understanding, however, that his work is not generally regarded as significant. I live in a country where, if you want information about the South, you subject yourself to the reports of Departments of Sociology rather than engage yourself with the novels of William Faulkner.

I should continue to buy the *Times* for other reasons, of course. It prints the texts of statements by various parties in controversy, governments, labour unions, candidates for public office. These are in the main lies, but they should be read by anyone attempting to deal with their subject. They should then be thrown away; reporting seems to me largely a task of selection; the serious reporter knows what to throw away, but he can hardly make that choice if he doesn't inspect it first.

The Washington coverage of the New York *Times* is, of course, a model of the possibilities and limitations of the American model. The limitations seem to me disabling ones. The Washington bureau of the *Times* cannot say, of course,

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that the United States Senate has not passed a notable piece of legislation on a domestic problem since Mr. Truman's second inaugural, unless we except certain lamentable laws designed to torment the Communists and their fellow-travellers in the cause of liberty. This means that, to read the *Times* from Washington, we must put up day after day with the insistent proposition that the Senate is a legislative body to be treated seriously.

The major problem of the Washington bureau of the *Times*—again our finest product—is the segregation of tone. Those stories described as hard news are written in a kind of official language which eludes upon touch; any official spokesman is to be taken as seriously as any other; any Senatorial clown is a source to be cited as attentively as was Robert A. Taft, a man of parts. The Washington bureau of the *Times* makes an effort to remedy this fundamental imbalance by assigning what are called "features," light observations on sidelights and sights. Here Senator Dirksen can be treated as a comic figure. This seems to me highly significant of our journalistic character: the information someone else hands you must be conveyed with the utmost gravity; your own observations must be offered as trivia. In the case of James Reston, Washington bureau chief of the *Times* and the most formidable journalistic talent of my experience, your speculations, except on matters apocalyptic, are to be presented in the comic style.

THE AMERICAN reporter, even at his best, is thus largely condemned to look at things in compartments, his style adjusted to the requirements of his subject. The whole man almost never functions. We see this in the novel *Advise and Consent*. Its author, Alan Drury, is a Washington correspondent of great experience and capacity. He does not, of course, know as much as he should about writing novels, but the writing of amateur novels about public people is a popular American vocation and not always because it avoids the laws of libel. Americans like to read books which give them information, a category which, for some reason, is meant to encompass Drury but not Henry James.

I should not choose to debate Drury on the basis of our comparative knowledge of the United States Senate; he has me there by light years. My only complaint is that, by the requirements of his trade, he was debarred from really absorbing his experience. As reporter, it was necessary for him to take every Senator seriously. He could never say that these were unimportant people. As a consequence, the limitations of character to be expected in unimportant people were magnified for him in Senators, until his disgust corrodes the whole book. His Washington seems all saints and devils, the rarest of humans. Drury has a superb, if mordant, sense of humour; in fifteen years as a Washington correspondent, thanks to our conventions of style, it has gone unexpressed except during the recesses in committee meetings. The poor fellow's habits inhibit him now from any sense that, if humour belongs anywhere, it is in a serious novel. The Washington of *Advise and Consent* is horrible, but it is not Washington; really, if the Washington of the last ten years were that serious a place, would Richard Nixon have advanced to become a major candidate for President of the United States?

THE FOREIGN COVERAGE of the New York *Times* seems to me to be in general miserable. There are exceptions, of course; to name any would be to shirk others, so I will let them pass. There is no event occurring abroad upon which the *Times*—here I have to except its Middle European correspondents—has ever given me any information critical to my judgment of history.

It was a year and a half behind on the Pasternak case. If I had depended on the *Times*, I don't believe I should ever have heard of Aldermaston; I should certainly not have understood even as much as I do now about the French moral crisis over Algeria. The entire British general election of 1955 was covered without giving us one significant quotation from Aneurin Bevan.

But my most oppressed memory is of the coming to power of General de Gaulle. This, after all, was a cultural more than a political crisis. The *Times* had one profile of André Malraux which barely suggested that he was a novelist. Those of us who kept wondering what Mauriac and Camus were saying were given only the observations of immolated premiers. The fundamental of *Times* foreign correspondence is that a country's politics can be explained without reference to its culture.

When I was in Italy two years ago, I made a rather serious, if unsuccessful effort, to engage its culture. Since then, I have retained a certain passion for that subject; I read every *Times* story on Italy with some concentration. I have no notion of what has happened since I left beyond a certain chronological recollection of unexplained events.

I RATE ENTERTAINMENT at least as important in a newspaper as I do information; in this case, I differ with Beichman in emphasis. But, with entertainment and information, I should certainly rank the capacity to predict events with some degree of accuracy.

Yet American newspaper readers are continually being surprised at revolutions, changes of front, ascensions to power. This is not because our readers are being lied to; we are surprised too; the proper image of the American reporter is of a man rushing to a fire of whose origin he is unconscious.

This is partly because we began as police reporters. Police stories are by definition unpredictable and without background; crime in most cases is the spontaneous act of a stranger. There are ways in which this is very good training; setting his product aside, I should rather ask questions of an American reporter about a story he covered than of anyone else I know; my colleagues know how to walk over strange floors with a

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vacuum cleaner. But to most American reporters, the meetings of a few seedy Marxist philosophers in Budapest could hardly have seemed worth covering; yet, without them, the events of 1956 had to come as a surprise. Having begun with an assignment where no background is possible beyond cultivation of the desk sergeant, it is understandable that for background we go to the Foreign Office.

I am proud of my colleagues, if not of myself; I know no group of men whose honesty and kindness commends itself more to me; and, without being personal, I can restrain myself from apologising for them to a nation which employs some of their colleagues in the *Express*, the *Mail*, and the *Telegraph*.*

But I confess I find them terribly handicapped by their training. As I have said, when we began as police reporters we depended for what our employers wanted on information given to us by policemen. A policeman's view of crime is hardly the entire one, but it offers the illusion of factual information. Life for a police reporter is far more difficult—I should say competitively almost impossible for a young man without extraordinary talent—when he offends the desk sergeant. A certain degree of comity is required. This comity means acceptance of the institution. I know what I am talking about; as a police reporter I was entirely conformist; I was covering one of the most corrupt departments on the Eastern Seaboard; and I was surprised whenever a cop was caught stealing. If there is a God to thank, I thank Him for not having given me the permanent assignment of J. Edgar Hoover; I should have ended up either mad or treating the Federal Bureau of Investigation the way the *Osservatore Romano* treats the Roman Curia and with considerably less reason.

MOST OF MY colleagues have more independent spirits, but habits die hard. The institution of the source governs their lives, and the accepted source is official. The consequence is that for the truth about institutions we have largely to look in other places than newspapers. Those Americans who covered the Moscow trials, for example, did badly, for reasons which seemed to informed anti-Stalinists explainable only as conspiratorial; in point of fact, the poor fellows were only police reporters doing their job as they always had, from police briefings.

The sanctity of the institution is the main reason why current newspapers are only usable by persons satisfied to know about the events of say five years ago. The best instance of this is newspaper coverage of the labour unions. The newspapers from 1945 to 1952 were full of reports of class conflict leading to labour-management adjustment; in point of historical fact, this process in the main had been completed by the end of the war. The real phenomenon of the late 'forties was recognition of class adjustment of the sort necessary to produce the labour racketeer; corruption of the unions was a fact familiar to every sophisticated observer of post-war America but never officially mentioned by even honourable representatives of the institution and therefore seldom suggested by the journalists whose responsibility was labour chronicle.

In 1954 there began a great scandal about labour racketeering; it became the great focus of reportage, roughly eight years after the fact. Something of consequence must be happening to American labour now; I look forward to reading about it in the *Times*, if I am lucky, say in 1968.

Full Circle

I wonder if any of your older readers have been reminded by the recent talks on China (published in The Listener*) of a certain type of journalism which existed in the nineteen-thirties. This type was much given to the excellence of Hitler's Germany, enlarging on "the merry faces everywhere"—"the people unanimously behind the government"—"the rebirth of the sense of the community"—"tremendous sense of the country's glorious history and great traditions," etc., etc. It was called reactionary in those days, but now I'm not so sure if that was the right term. In* The Listener *of March 2, Mr. E. P. Thompson tells us, in his talk on the New Left, that to some people "Castro's revolution seems more significant to them than Lenin's." This month's* ENCOUNTER *(Theodore Draper) tells me: "There have been three stages in Castro's attitude towards elections. First, he promised them. Then he said they were not immediately feasible. Now he ridicules them."*

The wheel has come full circle: "Father (Mao, Castro, or Thompson) knows best."

D. B. CONNELL
in THE LISTENER, *9 March*

*I once had the following experience with M. (of London's *Daily Z.*) which is relevant. We were covering a school integration case in Clay, Kentucky. M., who has energy, got there an hour before me, was met by a group of mountaineers with shotguns and ordered out of town. He left without argument, having made his point, which was to telegraph the Governor that he had been brutally treated and the *Daily Z.* that he was almost hospitalised. I arrived later, met the same group of anxious citizens, expressed my full agreement with their view that I was invading their privacy, and persuaded them to let me stay. It has always been my view—unshared by M.—that the vicissitudes of covering a story do not themselves constitute a story. Anyway, I was having a cup of coffee with the mayor when I decided to call my desk in New York. The editor asked where I was; I said Clay; and he asked at once in tones of indignation why I hadn't been thrown out of town. M.'s martyrdom had led the evening papers.

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And I am talking about men who have the shadow of opportunity. Most reporters do not; they work for our wire services; and they know when they sit down that they are writing for 1,100 editors, any one of whom may choose to bite off their report on some serious incident after one paragraph. It is therefore their assignment to put everything significant—in journalism this description covers five elements, three insignificant—into the first paragraph, rendering it by definition unreadable. And, since they can be truncated at any point thereafter, they cannot dare narrative flow, but must ring changes on the same set of facts in independent paragraph after independent paragraph. In cases where they are assured free play of space, they must remember the rule of objectivity, which consists of setting down, without evaluation, equal quotations from the two sides in a controversy, each of whom is lying to a degree.

All this, of course, is because their function is to fill space between advertisements. And, let it not be forgotten, all these efforts must be directed at an audience which presumably arrived yesterday morning from the moon and for whom it is necessary to identify Harold Macmillan as Prime Minister of Britain and which presumably, fifty-six years after the *Saltimbanques*, has not yet conceded that Picasso knows how to draw. This last requirement is not whimsical; it is a decision arrived at after some study of wire-service cultural material.

No such audience could possibly exist. This is why I do not believe anyone reads newspapers any longer, at least in the provinces, and fewer people read the *Times* than say they do. I know no trade with so many decent people in it—always excepting hand-lettering—which has so entirely lost its function. I remain surprised that Beichman and I share so many romantic illusions about it. Like our colleagues, I suppose, we have had our sense of reality dulled by habit. I could myself do nothing else; if I lost my present job, you should see me dyeing the grey out of my hair and pleading with a wire-service for a place to sit. After all, the triumphant craftsman in America is the distributor, a teamster, I suppose. A society which cannot produce potable beer or edible bread can hardly be expected to be sensitive to standards of craft. With the honest brewer gone, I am proud that my trade has as many honest journalists as it has.

Murray Kempton

Secret Ambitions

Donald McLachlan, *at 52, is the first editor of "The Sunday Telegraph," which made its appearance on February 5th with a print order of a million copies. "I suppose all of us has a secret ambition to edit* Encounter," *he says.*

The Queen (*London*)

LETTERS

"If . . ."

Professor P. M. S. Blackett's academic article about academic strategy [Encounter, April] contains a curious thing. He quoted Wohlstetter to the effect that:

> Russian casualties in World War II were more than 20 million. Yet Russia recovered extremely well from this catastrophe. There are several quite plausible circumstances in the future when the Russians might be quite confident of being able to limit damage to considerably less than this number—they make sensible choices and we do not. On the other hand, the risks of not striking might at some juncture appear very great to the Soviets, involving, for example, disastrous defeat in a peripheral war, loss of key satellites with danger of revolt spreading—possibly to Russia itself—or fear of attack by ourselves. Then, striking first, by surprise, would be a sensible choice for them, and from their point of view the smaller risk.

A page later he drew "attention to a revealing sentence in the quotation"—"*. . . they make sensible choices and we do not.*"

On this revealing sentence he constructed an argument that he imputed to Wohlstetter and to other game theorists (sic) like Wohlstetter. It is his "moral-asymmetry" argument, and it goes like this. There will be circumstances in which it will be plausible for the Russians to attack us *because* they make sensible choices where we do not. We too could well have attacked them and would have done so if we were sensible; but we are not sensible, we are moral.

I had an uneasy feeling that Blackett was spinning a deductive argument unrelated to Wohlstetter. I could recall no such impression of my own, so I looked in *Foreign Affairs* for January 1959 and discovered that a tiny but critical word had been left out of the quotation. In the original it reads, after the dash, "*if* they make sensible choices and we do not." (*My italics.*)

This not only changes the tone; it changes the subject. The sentence now means that plausible circumstances could arise *if* the Russians sensibly design their military forces and *if* we do not sensibly design ours. I think this small change collapses the moral-asymmetry argument that Blackett belabours as though it were Wohlstetter's.

So much for Wohlstetter who needs no defence from me; I was curious how Blackett could make such a mistake, since he had to read it erroneously the first time and also to copy it erroneously in the manuscript. On a hunch I checked the British magazine that reprinted the Wohlstetter article, and there it was without the "if."

I marvel at the difficulty of reaching understanding with the Soviets if a two-letter misprint in a reprint can cause such misunderstanding for some-

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one as similar in background and language as Blackett is to Wohlstetter.

Incidentally, I am curious that so many people on both sides of the Atlantic, just in the last ninety days, have hit on game theory as culprit. I don't see that game theory is any more involved than Latin grammar or geo-physics; but its quaint name makes mysterious and patronising references to it an effective ploy.

THOMAS C. SCHELLING

Harvard University

Bertrand Russell Replies

MR. CHRISTOPHER MAYHEW'S letter, in your issue of March 1961, calls for some reply from me. He says:

> The reason why the great majority of us oppose his views is not because we have not heard them or do not understand them, but because we *disagree* with them.

There are, however, many things in his letter which show that he does not understand my views. He supposes that those of us who are called "Unilateralists" are only anxious for *British* nuclear disarmament. This is an entire delusion on his part, though a not uncommon one among those whom he calls "us." A day or two before reading his letter I said in a speech at Birmingham:

> The policy that we advocate is called "unilateralism," but, unless accompanied by some explanations, this name for our policy is somewhat misleading. We want multilateral disarmament, but we think that British unilateral disarmament is the most effective step that Britain can take towards that end. This conclusion has been forced upon us by the utter failure of all disarmament conferences since the end of the last war.

All of us hope for general nuclear disarmament, but we have been forced by the repeated failure of direct negotiation between East and West to find some other means of bringing it about. We have come to think that the best hope of obtaining agreed disarmament by Russia and America is to be sought in the friendly intervention of neutrals. These neutrals could draw up impartial suggestions which each side could accept without loss of face, and we think that Britain would be more usefully employed as a member, and perhaps a leader of such a band of neutrals than as an impotent satellite of the U.S.

Mr. Mayhew, like many of our British opponents, says that the crucial question is, "If the Russians keep nuclear weapons, should the British renounce them?" This question would not be asked by anyone who had studied the strategy of a nuclear war. If Mr. Mayhew is prepared to make such a study, I advise him to look up Herman Kahn's article in *Survival*, Vol. II, No. 2; or, if he is prepared for a more serious study, to read the same author's book *On Thermonuclear War*. What he and the rest of "us" do not realise is something very damaging to British pride—namely, that nothing that Britain, or even NATO, can do will prevent Russia from destroying our whole population in half an hour if so disposed. Britain cannot have enough nuclear armament to inflict appreciable damage upon Russia, whereas Russia would require, at most, two per cent of her nuclear armament to destroy us completely. American orthodox authorities are agreed that, if we British were all corpses, America would see no point in turning all the rest of the world into corpses for the sake of a revenge which could not benefit us. And, again from national pride, most of "us" refuse to realise that we add practically nothing to the strength of America, but impose a difficult treaty obligation which probably cannot be fulfilled. America would be, if anything, stronger without us than with us, and we should be in less danger if we were not allied with America than we are at present.

Mr. Mayhew considers it illogical to be both a Unilateralist and a Multilateralist. This arises only from his wilfully or ignorantly distorting the aims of those who are called "Unilateralists." Where is the lack of logic in saying: "We wish everybody to disarm; but, meanwhile, let us disarm ourselves." I am, of course, willing, in all humility, to derive lessons in logic from Mr. Mayhew, but, so far, my logical capacities are not equal to following his argument on this point.

Mr. Mayhew finds fault with the C.N.D. for getting "excited." To my mind, it is those who do not get excited who are to blame. Suppose Mr. Mayhew had been a Member of Parliament in the time of Guy Fawkes. Would he not have got excited? And yet the crime that Guy Fawkes attempted was infinitesimal compared with the crime that present-day Governments contemplate. It is the magnitude of the crime that prevents "us" from feeling the appropriate emotion. If I proposed to massacre a hundred children chosen at random and had some prospect of being able to do it, I believe that even Mr. Mayhew would get excited. But when people propose to practise this same crime against everybody, we are expected to keep calm and to regard the intending perpetrators as great statesmen. I suppose we are to be inspired by the example of Nero fiddling. But then it was only Rome that was burning.

BERTRAND RUSSELL

Penrhyndeudraeth

IN THE STRESS of nuclear controversy, even Lord Russell's logic tends to go astray. The three main points he makes are quite easily answered.

1. "Mr. Mayhew considers it illogical to be both a unilateralist and a multilateralist." Yes, of course. If we use these words as they are normally defined, the illogicality is self-evident. Unilateralists are those who want Britain to disarm without conditions. Multilateralists are those who want her to disarm only if other countries do the same. The two groups are thus by definition mutually exclusive.

2. To sustain the claim that one can be a unilateralist *and* a multilateralist, Lord Russell must thus reject one or both of these definitions. His letter rejects, by implication, the definition of multilateralism. Instead he uses this word, with

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extreme imprecision, as though it were synonymous with (a) "general nuclear disarmament" (para. 5), (b) "agreed disarmament by Russia and America" (para. 5), and (c) "merely wishing everybody to disarm" (para. 7).

Of course if multilateralism meant all these things, everyone in the world, including Lord Russell, would be a multilateralist. But this is not what is meant by the word, and to use it loosely in these various senses is to make it meaningless.

Of course, Lord Russell can say that *Britain* should disarm *unilaterally* and *other countries* should disarm *multilaterally, i.e.*, by agreement. But if this is what he believes he should deny that he wants other countries to disarm unilaterally, or that he advocates multilateralism for Britain. He has not made this clear.

3. Lord Russell's other main point is to the effect that we British are so inferior to the Soviet Union in nuclear weapons that we should renounce these weapons altogether. But even if the facts were as Lord Russell states, the size of our national nuclear armoury is largely irrelevant to the question of renunciation. Twelve NATO countries very wisely refuse to renounce nuclear weapons even though they possess none of them themselves.

To the Editor of Time & Tide:

It is not difficult, in these days of snappy sneering journalism, to pack as much nastiness into a few hundred words as Time & Tide *did in its comment on* ENCOUNTER'S *study of "Castro's Cuba"; what does take some doing is to match the nastiness with as many inaccuracies in the same little space.*

1. *Neither* ENCOUNTER *nor "the cosmopolitan Congress for Cultural Freedom" (in the words of your Mr. Perry Anderson) "swiftly dispatched a trouble-shooter to man the ideological sector of this guerrilla front." Our author, Theodore Draper, wrote from New York City; and although seeing "the danger in time" could be taken as an editorial compliment (shouldn't journals be topical and relevant?), the fact is that Draper's manuscript was prepared and published months before the current military altercation.*

2. *The Ford Foundation is not in any sense of the phrase our "discreet all-American parent organisation." It has, over the years in which it has given financial support (all publicly announced) to schools, universities, research institutes, etc., been generous enough to help support a series of international conferences which the Congress for Cultural Freedom has organised in Oxford, Paris, Berlin, Cairo, Bombay, and Toyko.* ENCOUNTER *has, from time to time, published accounts of the debates which took place on those occasions.*

3. *That "Cuba has been a moment of truth for the Congress and its intellectuals, particularly in the U.S." is sheer fantasy. We know of no group of "Congress intellectuals," as such, in America, and the various contributors to Congress publications in Europe have written with varying viewpoints on Cuba under Castro.* ENCOUNTER'S *article by Draper was also published in* Preuves *(Paris), but in* Der Monat, *F. R. Allemann has published a series of articles from Havana with somewhat different interpretations, and in the Spanish-language* Cuadernos *recent pieces by Salvador de Madariaga and Boris Goldenberg have taken up with completely different emphases such problems as "Castro's positive achievements" and "the American record in Cuba."*

4. *What would be slanderous if it were not so absurd is the suggestion that we have been "adopting straight Cold War positions: no word of structural criticism of their sponsor country or the West generally, day-in-day-out onslaught on the East."* ENCOUNTER *is an independent review, "Anglo-American" if you will in its co-editorship, and we do not believe it would be able to command either the attention or the circulation that it does if it were the propaganda sheet which your writer insinuates.* ENCOUNTER *is a critical review, and no culture, East or West, and no governmental politics, Left-wing or Right-wing, has been immune from criticism in our pages. It can hardly have escaped your attention that in our last number we published from the pen of P. M. S. Blackett the most serious and formidable criticism of U.S. defence thinking that has as yet appeared.*

5. *"The worst kind of conformism and chauvinism have won the day." No, what has apparently won the day, to judge from the recent organised outbursts of pro-Castro hysteria in this country, is the worst kind of apologetics for repressive illiberal dictatorship since the friends of Mussolini praised the progress of "swamp reclamation" and the friends of Hitler "the new* autobahnen *and the beaming faces of youth" and the friends of Stalin "the singing peasants on happy collective farms." The friends of Castro are just as blind or just as deceitful. They swoon for social justice but close their eyes to the firing-squads. They write of Castro the liberator but ignore the Cuban editors, trade-unionists, university professors who have been arrested or forced to flee. Do law and human rights mean nothing to them? Are the apologists always unconcerned when a régime allows neither free speech nor free press, neither academic freedom at the university nor trade-union rights in the labour movement, neither civil liberties for political democrats nor fair trial for political prisoners? If to criticise such flagrant violations of human liberty constitutes "the worst kind of conformism"—conformism to Mill? to Jefferson?—then you may make the most of it.*

STEPHEN SPENDER, MELVIN J. LASKY

In Time & Tide, 27 April

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4. Lord Russell's last point is the hardest to deal with patiently. He writes:

> If I proposed the massacre of 100 children at random and had some prospect of being able to do it, I believe that then even Mr. Mayhew would get excited. But when people propose to practise this same crime against everybody we are expected to keep calm. . . .

I suppose if one believes, as Lord Russell evidently does, that the men in the Kremlin and the White House are evil, wanton people proposing at any moment to massacre each other's children, a touch of hysteria and self-righteousness of this kind is not out of place. But if, as I believe, the primary motivation of the nuclear powers is mutual fear, then fanning the flames of panic is a thoughtless and dangerous occupation. If nuclear war breaks out as a result of fear and suspicion, unilateralist propaganda will have a lot to answer for.

CHRISTOPHER MAYHEW

House of Commons

Strachey's Cry

No, I SAID, I will not write a letter to the editor about Mr. Strachey. He's having trouble enough without having sensitive Americans to worry about. Why is there—you see, I *had* to write—this ritualistic anti-Americanism among those who say they love us most? It all happened when I read the second part of Mr. Strachey's *The Strangled Cry* [December, 1960], and its apostrophe to Britain, "the traditional land of dissent; of dissent not only in its original connotation but of dissent itself: of—if you will—dissent for dissent's sake."

> In this respect there seems a persisting difference between the mental climates of Britain on the one hand, and Russia and America on the other. It has been well said that both Russia and America are "unanimous countries." The consensus of opinion at any one time is so strong in each of them that it is difficult indeed for an individual to swim against it.

But the question really is what dissent and whose dissent? Who is the dissenter—Gaitskell or Harold Wilson, George Brown or Frank Cousins, Pope John or the Archbishop, Arthur Horner or George Woodcock, the Executive of the Electrical Trades Union or the General Council of the T.U.C., Michael Foot or Ian Gilmour? Is Britain better off because the Labour Party is flaking off into a noble band of dissenters while the Tories carry on?

America a "unanimous country?" America, where a difference of a fraction of one per cent elected a President, where civil war rages among intellectuals on the issues of Castro, nuclear disarmament, the New Socialism, mass culture, Wilhelm Reich and Norman Mailer, higher education, summitry, the past and future of Lionel Trilling? And if, indeed, America is a "unanimous country," unanimous about what?

I submit that democratic government calls for consensus, some form of unanimity, some responsible acceptance of decision to make it function. Is Britain better off without an opposition party? (It is difficult to regard as a responsible party one whose inner opposition seems to have availed itself of tactics fathered as much by Joe McCarthy as by the lovable tradition of British dissent in the campaign to "get" Gaitskell. When the American Legion bars some "radical" speaker from addressing an American audience, it is cultural vigilantism, and when the Coventry party bans Gaitskell, I suppose that it's in the tradition of the amiable eccentricity of a Leslie Stephen.)

America's intellectual classes are so dispersed over 3½ million square miles rather than concentrated in a single metropolis, that dissent can have no central focus. And because there is no central, visible point, it becomes so easy to talk about a "unanimous country," just like Russia, just. Is there a powerful, enforced consensus in Britain which exacts, as the price of being heard, the tribute of fashionable criticism of America?

ARNOLD BEICHMAN

New York City

"Castro's Cuba"

I MUST congratulate you and thank you for the piece by Theodore Draper [ENCOUNTER, March] on "Castro's Cuba." It is much the most informative and illuminating thing I have read.

WALTER LIPPMANN

Washington, D.C.

I AM DELIGHTED that the area of agreement with Herbert Matthews [ENCOUNTER, May] seems far more important than the area of disagreement. As for the specific points at issue:

(1) A blueprint was farthest from my intentions, but I am willing to plead guilty to an attempt at rational analysis. Even the acts of emotional and irrational people may be analysed unemotionally and rationally. But how can the Cuban revolution be both "irrational" and a "natural development?"

(2) The Cuban revolution was largely instigated by those who were least miserable and least unemployable, and thus it was important to show that Cuba was not merely a "place of misery and filth" or unemployment. My emphasis was designed to counteract one-sidedness; I would be equally critical of the opposite kind of one-sidedness.

(3) The question is: which revolution was a "natural development"—the revolution Fidel promised or the revolution he has made. If the first, yes; if the second, no. I doubt whether Matthews and I disagree on this, but the use of "revolution" to cover both phases may cause a great deal of confusion.

(4) Far from underestimating Fidel, I think his mass appeal was the decisive element that made everything else possible. But his mass appeal is a means, not an end, and in the realm of ends, one must ask: who leads the Leader?

THEODORE DRAPER

New York City

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